



“REMINISCENCES”

BY THE

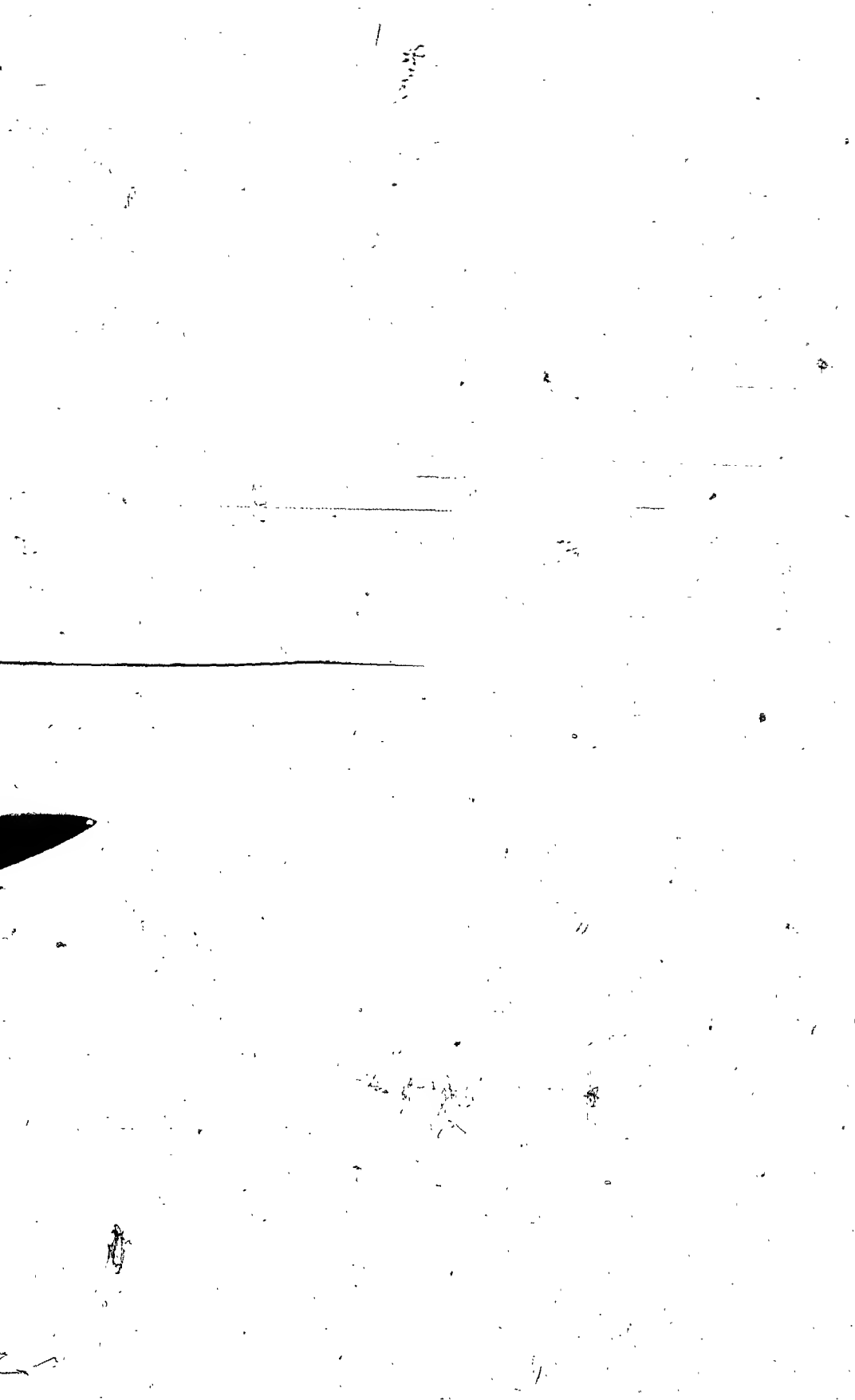
HONORABLE RODERIC MCKENZIE

BEING CHIEFLY A

SYNOPSIS OF LETTERS

FROM

SIR ALEXANDER MACKENZIE



## REMINISCENCES

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On my arrival in Canada, in september 1784, Peter Stuart, <sup>1784</sup> Esq., of Quebec, to whom I had a letter of introduction, advised me strongly to fix my mind on the Indian trade, and that he would recommend me to his friends of Montreal, who were largely concerned in the commerce of the Indian territories.

In the course of the ensuing winter, a new company, lately formed, starting up business, friends of my uncle, viz : Messrs Gregory McLeod & Company agreed to take me into their service, and, in June 1789, I embarked at *Sainte-Anne* for the North West under an engagement of three years.

St. Ann's church was the last church on our route, and the *Voyageurs*, in consequence, generally drop a piece of money into a box there, as an offering, to secure the protection of "*La Bonne Sainte Anne*" during their absence, and I, with a view to do as the people of Rome do, joined my mite to that of the rest of the crew.

The brigade was in charge of a respectable middle aged man named LaLonde, a guide well known among the *voyageurs* of that time. In about two days, our brigade reached the head of the *Long Sault*, in the Ottawa, where the guide had orders to wait for Mr. Gregory who appeared with two gentlemen Mr. Duncan Pollock and Mr. James Finlay. The first has served his time in the Post Office of Quebec, but had lately been engaged in the



trade among the Indians of Michilimakinac and, of course, was understood to be learned in Indian affairs.

Mr. James Finlay was the son of Mr. James Finlay formally of the North West, specially mentioned by Mr. MacKenzie as having made money with which he returned to Montréal and soon became a notable there. The son was brother-in-law to Mr. Gregory, and an accomplished young gentleman of about my age, and on the same footing as me in the service.

Though the country might be called an old country; there was yet no farms nor houses to be seen from the *Long Sault*, near-Montréal, to the *Sault Sainte-Marie*, the discharge of Lake Superior, so that we had to perform the journey through a deary wilderness.

Blue Sna-  
kes.

One evening, happening to encamp on a small island covered with brush wood, we odserved a bush of a blueish cast which we found to be caused by a coil of blue snakes. M. Finlay amused himself tickling them with his cutlass, and in a few moments the camp was swarming with them, to my great horror and to that of many others. Mr. Finlay, on the contrary, delighted in running after them, in handling them, and even in putting some within his shirt, and allowing them to crawl around his legs and body without the least fear. These reptiles are harmless, and in some parts of the North West, infest the houses as rats and mice do in Canada, and the people think nothing of it.

At the entrance of the Little River, we overtook a brigade of canoes bound for Michilimakinaw with which we continued to *The Vase*, where Mr. McCrea, the proprietor, embarked with Mr. Gregory and left the brigade in charge of Mr. Smith, his brother-in-law, a promising young gentleman who, next day, in crossing Lake Nipisangué, lost his life in a storm with ten of his men, by the swapping of his canoe at cable's length from the shore. Eleven crosses, erected on the adjoining landing, mark their

graves, and the point has in consequence been called since *Pointe des Noyés* (1).

*Pointe des  
noyés.*

When this melancholy accident occurred to Mr. McCrea's brigade, he himself was with us at the entrance of Lake Huron. Our guide, perceiving the impending gale, hastened to the shore, and ordered the men to unload. Mr. Gregory, wishing to proceed, desired the guide to continue, but he declined saying in an angry tone : *Allez si vous voulez, sacrédié ! pour moi je n'irai pas ; ne voyez-vous pas le danger ?* and in less than half an hour, our tents were down about our ears and our baggage in a moment deluged in rain.

I did not hear of the Nipisangué misfortune till the year after. Mr. Smith was one of the best swimmers in Montreal. I was told by his intimate friends that he could, with ease, swim from the *quai* of Montreal to the Island of St. Helen's and back again, a distance nearly as large as the Hellespont.

At *La Cloche*, we found an indian lodge, the temporary dwelling of a tall, coarse looking Canadian, who had under his care an indian woman, surrounded by several children beside a little one laced to an ornamented board suspended from the arm of a tree. In the lodge, I observed a very long fowling piece, the mounting ornamented with silver instead of brass, which, I was told, belonged to the master, a *Monsieur Constant*, an indian trader then absent. The tall canadian's name, I learned since, was Villeneuve, a native of this place (2), a few days ago, at the age of eighty. He was very indolent, very poor, but very honest ; much of an Indian, which is not to be wondered at, having past the best part of his life among them.

At a point called Tesselon in Lake Huron, Messrs Gregory, McCrea and James Finlay left us for Michilimakinaw, where

(1) To-day, *Pointe aux Croix*, on south shore of Lake Nipissing, at about 10 miles from its outlet.

(2) Terrebonne.

the British government intended at one time to build fortifications in lieu of making them at St. Joseph. Mr. Pollock, who had been a long time among the Indians of Michilimakinaw, assumed, as senior, Mr. Gregory's place. His conduct was often very unpleasant at least to me and at length brought on an explanation which placed us on a good footing for the rest of the voyage, if not for ever after.

At The Pic, on Lake Superior, we found Mr. Duncan Cameron from Montreal, *en route* for Népigon with goods for Mr. Shaw by whom he was employed as clerk. He afterwards became a partner in the North West Company.

At the *Tonnerre* or *Pays Plat* we met Mr. Pangman (1) from the Grand Portage, a proprietor in the concern. He was anxious for our arrival on account of the season, and had come on the look out. He accompanied us to his new establishment, which consisted of one *hangard* or store warmly put together, and sufficiently spacious for the purpose of the season. (2) He and Mr. Ross, another partner, who left Montreal with him early in the Spring, had this building erected after their arrival.

A few days after, Mr. Gregory, Sir Alexander MacKenzie and Mr. James Finlay arrived from their visit to Michilimakinac. Now, all the members of the new concern were assembled at their Head Quarters, viz. : Messrs John Gregory, Peter Pangman, John Ross, A. MacKenzie, partners ; Mr. Normand McLeod, being only a dormant partner, remained in Montreal ; Messrs Duncan

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(1) Mr. Peter Pangman was one of the earliest North-West fur traders after the Cession. He left the North-West Company in 1793 and purchased the seigniory of Mascouche where he settled: His son, the Hon. John Pangman, inherited of the seigniory, and one of the latter's daughters was married to Mr. Justice Casault of Quebec.

(2) On the North side of Pigeon River, *Rivière aux Tourtes*, and opposite the "old fort" occupied by their opponents.

Pollock and Laurent Leroux, (1) were clerks, M. James Finlay and myself apprentice clerks. The guides, *commis*-men and interpreters were few in number and not of the first quality.

Messrs. Pollock and Leroux did not seem to like doing the ordinary drudgery attending the general *rendez-vous*, and were seldom called upon to do it, so that I, who could yet claim no privilege, necessarily became the fag of the whole; but I did not grumble, though I often made the *comptoir* my pillow.

However, the busy time did not last long; the outfits, being not extensive, were soon despatched to their destination, viz: For Athabasca, in charge of Mr. Ross; English River, Mr. MacKenzie; *Fort des Prairies*, Mr. Pangman; Red River, Mr. Pollock. Several other outfits of smaller importance were made out and entrusted to subalterns.

The Grand Portage was given in charge to a Mr. Pierre L'Anniau, who had been for many years in that country, and was so handy that he was considered a "jack of all trades"; but as he knew *ni* "A" *ni* "B" I was left with him, I suppose, to supply that deficiency. Eighteen *voyageurs* were placed under his command for erecting the buildings and for the purposes of the *traite*.....

The "old fort" was in charge of Mr. Cloutier, who was a very respectable old man. Mr. Givins, that year from Montreal, was assistant to Mr. Cloutier as I was to Mr. Lanniau. He had been brought up at Detroit, spoke the principal Indian languages as well as the Indians themselves, and was a very pleasant young man. He and I, though in opposition, were always together and separated, in the Spring, good friends. He soon after left

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(1) Mr. Lauront Leroux, on his return from the North-West, in 1796, married a Miss Esther Loiselle. He settled at l'Assomption, represented the county of Leinster in 1861 in the Legislative Assembly, and died in 1855, aged 97, leaving a daughter who married Mr. Moïse Raymond in 1815 and who still lives in Montreal.

the country to reside in Upper Canada, where he was appointed Superintendent of Indian affairs and still lives there, greatly advanced in age and enjoying a comfortable pension.

In the Fall, when the Indians were about the place, the young men and I became great friends, which, on their return with their hunt in the spring, they did not forget.

In the Spring, one of the Indians had a difficulty with Mr. Lanniau, whom I had now superseded ; I interposed ; he was turned out of the fort, his knife taken away from him and he was severely hurt in the scuffle. Some days after, when he was more in his senses, he called for his knife, which was given him and he turned to me with an angry look, " When the leaves grow large in the Portage, I will remember you ".

Drinking  
match, unc  
boisson.

That evening the Indians had a drinking match. They were yelling, quarrelling, fighting and making such a dreadful racket, that one might believe that all the Furies of Hell were let loose in the camp, but our gates were of course secured.

In the morning, one of the young men came and informed us that five indians were dead, " One of them I killed, said he, he was your ennemy and meant to kill you on the first opportunity " (1).

During the Spring, the Indians gave a great entertainment to which all the lodges in the camp were invited to partake. I also had an invitation. When all were assembled and seated in the Grand Lodge prepared for the purpose, each guest was served with a small bundle, neatly tied, of *original* dried meat of the best quality ; but my appetite could not do justice to the

(1) The Indians were in the habit of collecting around the forts with their families in the Spring of the year, to harter their furs ; they were, however, never allowed in numbers within the stockades, the doors of which were always closed during the drinking match "hoissons", which the traders, at that time, invariably gave on all important occasions. Close competition had rendered the Indians very exacting on that score, and they always refused to do business unless allowed to indulge in those orgies which very often ended in murder.

whole of my *portion*. A friend close by me, observing my embarrassment, asked the rest saying "I shall manage it for you". The *festin* was a *festin* "à tout manger".

This spring, the first arrivals after the opening of the navigation 1786. were Mr. Robert Grant and Mr. William McGillivray, who had wintered in the Red River department. These gentlemen were of the opposition and strangers to me, but I called upon them and was well pleased with my reception.

My occupations this summer at Grand Portage were the same as the preceding summer. In due season, I was directed to embark with Mr. A. MacKenzie, one of the proprietors, for his department, the English River. At the entrance of English River, he went ahead and occasionally left me a line along the route. These lines, I find, are now missing, but his first letter to me is as follows :

« Last Portage, 22 Sept. 1786.

« Dear Roderic,

« I perused the first of yours, per Constantineau, with some uneasiness, but was happy to find that the Indians became calm and hope they will remain so. Should opponents come along side of you, you must do as they do. It is impossible for me to give you any directions ; therefore I leave it entirely to yourself. I met the bearer and his three companions here last night, and gave them some credits and presents, and made them promise to find you and remain with you till the Spring. You will require to give them many presents, as they will often tell you that they will get more at Small's forts. They are much afraid of the Crees, as they think they killed some of their relations this summer, which will be a good pretence to keep them with you.

« If I can spare Lacerte, you may depend upon it, I shall send him to you on the first ice. You may perhaps see *Petit Bauf*

and several of his people. He is very troublesome at times, so that you must take care of yourself, though he was not so with me; but as he will see you with so few men, he may take advantage of it. If he remains quiet and does not molest other Indians, endeavour to retain him with you, as he is an excellent hunter.

"You never met with so troublesome Indians as the Chippewans, continually asking things for nothing; but they will not be much displeas'd at your refusal. I wish you a quiet winter and remain,

"Dear Roderic,

"Your sincere friend,

"ALEX. MACKENZIE."

"To Mr. Roderic McKenzie,

"Where he is to be found.

"I forgot to give the men a dram; give them one for me and give them what advances they may want. The Bearer is a favorite, you must pay him a little more attention than to the others, as he is really attached to us".

*Le Joli jeune homme* (the Bearer) Dr.

1 blanket .....	8 skins	
1 blanket .....	7 "	
1 trench, ice.....	2 "	
1 cotillon.....	7 "	
1 fathom tobacco.....	4 "	
1 Beaver coat Pd & marked....	4 "	
		32-skins.

*Accass* Dr.

1 axe .....	3 skins
1 pr sleeves .....	3 "
1 coat, 2½ ells .....	4 "
Tobacco .....	2 "
1 coat, 1 ell.....	2 "

14 "

*Watjess*

1 pr sleeves .....	2 skins
1 cotillon .....	7 "
1 Blanket .....	5 "
1 coat, 1½ ells.....	3 "
	————— 17 skins.

*Le Boucan*

1 pr leggins .....	3 skins
1 coat, marked and Pd.....	4 "
	————— 70 (1).

" Dear Roderic,

" I wrote you some time ago pr *Le Joli jeune homme*—which I hope you have received. I arrived here (2) safe on the 24 ult. Found some Indians waiting my arrival to take credits, which I gave them, an acct of which you have enclosed (3)—they waited seven days for me.

" As soon as Bibeau arrived, Mr. Small got two canoes ready which set off next morning; I suppose they are now alongside of you. I should have despatched the bearer, Lacerte, immediately after them, but he expected his wife from Athabasca, as the fellow is almost mad for her, and I am anxious, having had no news from Mr. Ross.

" I sent off Versailles with four men, my best, seven days ago to the Beaver River; I expect Versailles will do as well as the famous Lesieur. (4) I remain here with only six men, the lame, the sick, and no interpreters. I sent Leonard yesterday with two

(1) Beaver skins.

(2) *Ile à la Crosc.*

(3) In order to economise freight, and to enable the Indians to hunt at a distance, credits were often given payable at another fort.

(4) Mr. Tonssaint Lesieur, who, in 1792, established Fort Alexander at the mouth of the Winnipeg River, a few miles below and opposite the old French fort Maurepas.



Indians who took 54 skins credit from me ; as they do not go your way, I do not send you an account of their credits.....

“ I believe our Rivals will use no force regarding the Indians ; they told me they did not mean to use any, but would allow the Indians to go where they pleased. I gave them to understand that if they did otherwise, or order their men to take the Indians' property into their forts or houses against their will, I would look to them only for redress, which I am resolved to do. I will not be imposed upon ; trade must be as free to us as to them.

“ I spoke to M. McGillivray, he promised he would advise and oblige the Indians, as much as he could, to pay their credits, and I have no doubt, he will do so .....

“ Take care of Cartier, Mr. McGillivray's interpreter, as he is a very keen, insinuating fellow. Keep every thing as secret as you can from your men, otherwise those old *voyageurs* will fish all they wish out of your green hands.

“ I hope you will be on a more friendly footing with your neighbours than I am with mine ; we have not spoken together since the canoes left this, which, I believe, is more from indifference than from hatred, as we have had no quarrel ” .....

“ It would not be amiss if you could pay the Indians a visit yourself with Constantineau, and endeavour to make their robes and coats, if you cannot go yourself, send Lecerte and Laliberté ”.

“ There are about ten men of the Cree nation at the other fort, all connexions, and I cannot see one of them. I have no one at the fort that can make *raquettes* ; I do not know what to do without those articles. See what it is to have no wives ! Try and get *raquettes*, there is no stirring without them. Send me Constantineau on the first ice, as I find none of my men speak

Cree, and I shall send you another man. My compliments to Mr. McGillivray.

“Your sincere friend and well wisher,

“A. MACKENZIE”.

“To Mr. Roderic McKenzie,

“*Lac des Serpents.*”

Having been directed by Mr. McKenzie to remain with the Indians of *Lac des Serpents* (1), on my arrival there, I fixed on a place for the winter, at their advice. I thought it however advisable to take my time and look about me before I should commence building. In the interval, M. McGillivray appeared well determined for opposition. His order, he said, were to place himself along side of me, but he observed that he did not approve of the situation I had selected, and that he was informed of a much better one not far distant, and suggested it would be for our mutual good if I would accompany him to this place, which I, without hesitation, agreed to, and, in a few hours, we reached our proposed destination, in the vicinity of a small river which promised a plentiful fishery.

*Fort Lac au  
Serpent.*

Here we pitched our tents within a gun shot of one another. Next day, all hands were set to work, and, in a short time, comfortable lodgings for the winter were completed.

Though the trade was the cause of occasional irritation in the course of the winter, my neighbour and I always kept on speaking terms and maintained a good understanding, and I had the good fortune to secure, as the year before, what were called, excellent returns.

In the Spring, after the trade was over, my neighbour and I, after comparing notes, agreed to travel in company to our respective head-quarters, where our canoes arrived side by side,

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(1) Near and below *Ile à la Croix.*

the crews singing in concert. Notwithstanding the surprise the chorus caused, we both were well received at the water side by our respective employers. Mr. McGillivray and I lived on friendly terms ever after (1).....

1787

It being now the beginning of June, 1787, Mr. MacKenzie, finding that the Athabaska canoes retarded too much, felt anxious on account of the lateness of the season, and took his departure for the Grand Portage.

Murder of  
Mr. Ross.

At length the Athabaska brigade made its appearance, and the guide informed us that the delay was caused by the death of Mr. Ross, who had been shot in a scuffle with Mr. Pond's men. This misfortune, I thought, should be communicated to the other partners as soon as possible, and, having no one I could trust, I resolved on going myself, gave charge of my post to Versailles, the interpreter, and embarked on one of the Athabaska canoes.

At the first encampment I had one of the canoes prepared for my voyage, and left the others in charge of the only guide we had. The following morning I embarked with five men who volunteered and depending on my foreman as a guide. He knew little or nothing of the route, which we lost as often as it could be lost, so that it took us one month of hard labour to arrive at our destination.

(1) Mr. William McGillivray became a partner at the reorganization of the North-West Company in 1790, and soon became one of its most influential members.

He was appointed a Legislative Councillor in 1814, in recognition of the services rendered to the country by the Company during the war. The North-West Company was then at the height of its power, and had considerably contributed, with its men and ships, to the taking of Michilimackinac, in July 1812. During the whole war, their well supplied stores were thrown open to the Government for the use of the Indians in the West.

A few years before the coalition of 1821, Mr. McGillivray returned to the Highlands of Scotland where he purchased a property, intending to enjoy in comparative quietness the handsome fortune he had made in Canada; but the hardships he had endured in the North-West had ruined his constitution and he died about 1825.

The cause of our appearance so unexpectedly was soon known through the place, and the Proprietors lost no time in communicating it to our opponents. A meeting of all concerned immediately took place, and it was soon decided to unite the interests of both companies for their common welfare. Coalition  
of the rival  
companies.

Previous to my arrival with the information, some of the outfits of both parties were already made up and forwarded across the Grand Portage for the interior, and the other outfits were in great progress, so that their contents could not well be received into the general concern before the arrival of the several brigades at their respective destinations.

Mr. Ross being no more, Mr. A. MacKenzie was named for the Athabaska department, where M. Pond, from the unfortunate circumstances of the preceding winter, had remained under a cloud. Mr. Small continued in charge of English River, and I was placed under his command, but authorized, under the new arrangement, to superintend the particular interests of my employers.....

" Rivière Maligne (1), 1 sept. 1787.

" Dear Roderic,

" I wrote you a letter at the entrance of Lake Winnipeg, which I hope you have received. I now enclose you sundry papers which you will peruse with Mr. Thomson. You will advise him to be cautious in every respect where he is going to. Trouble  
with H. B.  
Co.

" The English (2) are badly inclined. They told me that if I should send any men to the place where *La Grosse Tête* had passed the winter, M. Thomason would go himself at the head of a party, seize upon the goods, take the men prisoners, and send

(1) North of Fort Cumberland, on the route to the Churchill River.

(2) The Hindson Bay Company's servants, to distinguish them from the North-West Company's people who, irrespective of their nationality were "The French."

all to Hudson Bay, adding, if any resistance was offered, that no mercy should be shown. But Mr. Thomason was not then aware of the coalition of the two companies, and I did not think proper to tell him of it. However Mr. Robert Thomson ought to build a fort this Fall.

" I am surprised you did not take charge of the goods brought out last Spring by *La Grosse Tête* ; I find one half of them have been squandered, and the other half hid in *Lac Bourbon* where they cannot be found.

" I have Cardinal here for Mr. McGillivry, he has promised me to look for the provisions hid by Lacerte in an Island. I could not take my man from the English, he is engaged to them for several years. They are determined to hire as many of our men as they can.

" I am dear Roderic.

" Yours sincerely,

" A. MACKENZIE "

" *Ile à la Crosse*, 1st Oct. 1787.

" Dear Roderic.

" I have yours of the 11th ult. per Constantineau, now before me. The accident of the 14th of Augt. was very unfortunate as it has left me destitute of all necessaries and equipments for inland. Were it not for that accident, I should, by this time, be in the Athabaska River with all the canoes ; now I am afraid that the goods cannot get there this season .....

" The men who passed the summer here did not respect Versailles and they have done nothing .....  
 .....I put your books, all but the History of England, into your *cassette*. I have no necessaries to send you ; you will

pass this winter in the best manner you can ; we must hope for better times ".....

" I remain dear Roderic

" Yours sincerely

" A. MacKENZIE".

" Remember me to all the men.....

" ATHABASCA, 2 Dec., 1787.

" Dear Roderic,

" I wrote you from *Rivière La Loche*, on the 9th October last. On the 21st, I arrived here in a light canoe, having been obliged to leave the rest of my canoes at *Lac La Loche* ; but I believe there will be plenty of goods here for winter trade. St. Germain arrived too late to send any of the goods in his charge further.

" Mr. McLeod and Mr. Boyer went on foot to the Beaver country for provisions (1). The Indians came with them to this place. We have ordered Mr. Leroux to abandon the Slave Lake and come up with all his men. From what I can learn from the men, none of the goods I sent him from *Ile à la Crosse* remain, and there are scarcely any return in their place. Mr. McLeod has been more successful.".....

" Write me by the first opportunity what you mean to do, whether you mean to remain in the country or not. If you do remain, I make no doubt but you will get as good encouragement as any in the concern .....  
.....If you remain in the country any longer,

(1) Beaver Indians "Echel tao tims", *gens des bois forts* : Wentzel. Mr. Henry says they are called "Beaver Indians" because they descend from the Great Beaver, one of their mythological divinities !

you will find it your interest to continue until you obtain some share in the trade.

Results of  
competi-  
tion,

“ After the experience you must have of the dreadful effect the late opposition has had upon those who were engaged in it and upon the country, I cannot believe you entertain any thought of a repetition on your own account. Could I, in four years of hard labour and anxiety, pay the debts I owe our concern in consequence, I should feel satisfied. I expect a long letter from you by the return of bearer; in the mean time”.

“ I remain your sincere friend

“ ALEX. MACKENZIE ”.

Mr. MacKenzie anticipated his visit, having paid it in January, when we had the pleasure of enjoying his company for several days. He and Mr. Small did all in their power to induce me to continue in the service, which I declined. On his way back to Athabasca, he wrote to me as follows from *Lac La Loche* :

“ As your resolution is taken I cannot but say something to you regarding our last conversations. Your rejecting the offer made to you, I will not pretend to condemn or approve. If you mean to continue in the country as clerk, though I thought, from some of your expressions at our separation, that you had some other views, perhaps you may settle with the gentlemen at the Portage upon more easy and advantageous terms.

“ Whatever you mean to do, weigh matters maturely and consider consequences. It is far more easy for a man to get into troubles than to get out of them. Should you agree to return, I am sorry it cannot be to Athabasca, as you will arrive too late at the Portage.

“ I already mentioned to you some of my distant intentions, (1) I beg you will not reveal them to any person, as it might be

(1) His voyage to the Arctic Ocean.

prejudicial to me, though I may never have it in my power to put them in execution. ».....

The following letter, dated *Ile à la Crosse*, by Mr. MacKenzie, 1st February 1788, to the agents of the Company at the Grand Portage; may be of use some time or other, as it gives a true statement of his proceeding to that period.

“ Gentlemen,

“ I am sorry to inform you that owing to many unforeseen accidents, the goods that were in my charge last Fall did not get in Athabasca, I was stopped, the 2nd October, for five days by the ice within thirty leagues of this place. I was obliged to send back two canoes with sixty three pieces to lighten the others. Then I proceeded, with the other canoes, but being frequently obliged to break the ice, we advanced slowly, and got to *Lac La Loche* only the 11th. Early winter.

“ The weather at this time was so very severe that I lost all hopes of getting any further, and our provisions were almost exhausted. I therefore had only three canoes and their loading carried by all the men across the Portage; but when they arrived there, which was on the 14th, the ice was taken on the river for two leagues, and the ice driving so thick further on, that there was no possibility of pulling a canoe into it. We could not wait here in expectation of the river getting clear, having no hunters, and I had the goods secured from wild beasts and allowed the men to return to *Lac La Loche* for their winter quarters.

“ On the 17th, the weather getting milder, and the ice running not quite so thick, I got eight of my men to embark with me in a light canoe. These men left their own things and we, with great difficulty and risk, arrived at Athabasca the night of the 25th.



" I found that St. Germain arrived there fifteen days before, and, from the unusual severity of the weather, too late to send goods to either the Slave Lake or Peace River countries. Mr. Grant made an attempt with two canoes for the former place without effect. He was stopped by the ice at the entrance of Athabasca Lake, from whence he despatched two men with intelligence to Mr. Leroux.

" Messrs. MacLeod and Boyer went off for the latter place, on the 9th November, with twelve men and nine pieces, in order to trade some provisions for the canoes in their voyage out in the Spring, and to induce the Indians to come to the fort with their hunt in March.

" Two of Mr. Leroux's men arrived from there with letters acknowledging the receipt of Mr. Grant's despatches, which give a very discouraging account of that country. I wrote to Mr. Leroux, with Mr. Pond's concurrence, to come up with his men and bring as many as possible of the Indians along with him.

Trade prospects.

" It is difficult to say what can be done in time to come in this country, but, as far as can be judged from present appearances, there will be no possibility of establishing a fort there to advantage, nor could the produce come out the same year.

" I am certain, if the Chipewians could be drawn away from there, the other nations would draw near, and if a *rendez-vous* could be established, an advantageous trade would be carried on every summer.

" I cannot well inform you what time—from scarcity of provisions—the canoes with the returns may be expected at *Lac La Pluie*; yet it may be about the 20th July.....

" Gentlemen,

" Your most obt and humble servant,

" ALEX. MACKENZIE".

The following from Mr. Small, dated *Ilc à la Crosse* 24th Feby 1788, is addressed to Mr. McTavish.

"Dear Sir,

"I have written to the New Company concerning all the transactions of this place, and I have likewise written the Old Company a statement of our summer affairs to accompany Mr. Pond's letters and papers relative to the Slave Lake, to which I beg leave to refer you".

"Mr Pond's letter of the 5th Dec. was some time before Mr. Mr. Pond. MacKenzie left Athabasca. He left it suddenly which was the cause Mr. Pond did not write me by him.

"I am quite surprised at the wild ideas Mr. Pond has of matters, which Mr. MacKenzie told me were incomprehensibly extravagant. I wrote him, in answer to his of the 3rd Dec., as satisfactorily as I could. I observed to him he could have no reason to think that any thing was even thought of contrary to the mutual interest of all concerned. I put it in his option to go with or after the packs, but represented to him that he required to be expeditious, if he intented returning after seeing the Grand Portage. He is preparing a fine map to lay before the Empress of Russia.....

"I am, dear Sir, most sincerely yours,

"PAT. SMALL".

"ATHABASKA, 15 May, 1788.

"Dear Roderic,

"I did not expect to write you any more letters from this country, as I supposed you would go out with the first canoes, but I find by Mr. Small's letter that this is not the case.

"Your letter of the 31st March I received the 11th instant, and will only trouble you at present with an answer to part of it. You say you were informed I was displeased with you" .....  
 .....Your refusing what I offered by no means displeased me. Circumstanced as I was, I might have offered you less, but I believe I never advised you to accept less or worse terms than the best clerk the Company had.

"As for your notions of "slavery", I cannot approve of it. It shows you were never acquainted with this abject condition. If you had, for five or six years, been subjected to the caprice of a tyrant or tyranny of a mistress, and, that, for no pecuniary consideration, your ideas of it would be quite different.

"Mr. Pond is just setting off, therefore I must conclude; with the same esteem as usual, dear Roderic.

"Your sincere friend,

"ALEX. MACKENZIE".

"I won't forget your books".

Mr. Pond who was the bearer of the above letter, was the first merchant from Canada who ventured so far as Athabasca and established a trading post there in 1778, just ten years before. Being accused, at different times, of having been instrumental towards the death of two gentlemen who were in opposition to his interest, he was now on his way out of the country on his defence.

About this time, Mr. MacKenzie became extremely anxious and uncertain whether he would leave or remain in the country. However the latter prevailed, and, before the end of July, he was back to *Lac La Poudre* for the arrangement of the Athabaska

affairs there, and insisted upon my accompanying him once more to the interior, which, notwithstanding my high regard for him, I declined.

He then informed me, in confidence, that he had determined on undertaking a voyage of discovery the ensuing Spring by the water communications reported to lead from Slave Lake to the Northern Ocean, adding, that if I could not return and take charge of his department in his absence, he must abandon his intentions. Considering his regret at my refusal, and the great importance of the object he had in view, I, without hesitation, yielded to his wishes, immediately set to work and accompanied him into Athabasca .....  
Mr. A. Mac-Kenzie's Arctic voyage.

On our arrival at Mr. Pond's old establishment (1), the outfits for the several posts of the Department, were made up and despatched. I was appointed for Athabaska Lake, which was in the neighbourhood, say about one or two day's distance. Mr. MacKenzie himself remained to pass the winter with two or three men at the Old Post, the other men accompanied me to the Lake, where we were to make a new establishment and depend on our own industry in fishing for a living.

On my arrival at our destination, I looked out for a suitable spot for a new establishment to replace the old one of Mr. Pond. After making every possible enquiry and taking every measure of precaution, I pitched on a conspicuous projection that advances about a league into the Lake, the base of which appeared in the shape of a person sitting with her arms extended, the palms forming as if it were a point.  
Fort Chipewean.

On this point we settled and built a fort which we called Fort Chipewean (2). It is altogether a beautiful, healthy situation, in

(1) At about thirty miles from Lake Athabasca, on Elk River, *Rivière à la Biche*.

(2) Fort Chipewean, for several years the most important in the North, was so called because it was intended more particularly for the trade with that nation. It was, later, found more advantageous to abandon it and to build another on the north shore of the Lake.

the center of many excellent and never failing fisheries, provided they are duly attended to at the proper season.

“ Athabaska, Friday, 21st Nov., 1788.

“ Dear Rory,

“ This is to acknowledge your sundry favors of the 15th and 16th instant per Laverdure and Cantara. They arrived yesterday, about 10 o'clock A.M., and go off to-day at noon. I find, by their account of time, which they say is yours, that we do not agree, this being Saturday. Inclosed you will receive your perpetual almanack, which will put you to right, as I imagine we have lost no time!

“ I am glad to hear you are having such good fishing, and I am told you share in the trouble that attends it. I suppose it is one of your maxims to get acquainted with every thing that is to be done in the country. Fishing at this season is a very cold handed business; I send you a pair of mittens to keep your fingers warm though I understand you have not yet used any.

“ I remain, dear Roderic,

“ Your's,

“ ALEX. MACKENZIE ”.

Three men and myself, I recollect, visited six nets three times a day from under the ice during that Fall fishery, but no mittens can be used during that serious operation. The fingers and wrists, while occupied in managing the nets and disentangling the fish from the meshes, must be kept constantly immersed to prevent their freezing.

I had a number of *voyageurs* in charge; they were divided into crews independent of each other and in different houses, each house to provide itself at the fisheries.

About Christmas, Mr. MacKenzie paid us a visit which he extended to the departure of the winter Express in February. In his letter to the Partners at Grand Portage, dated 14th February, he says :

“ I had a very favorable voyage into the country until a short distance from *Ile à la Croix* when one of the canoes got injured and sunk. By this unfortunate accident I lost two men and eleven pieces of goods. After repairing the damages as well as we could, we continued our voyage and arrived at this department on the 29th September, which was our fifty-second day from *Lac La Pluie* and the shortest voyage, I believe, that has been performed to this quarter, with loaded canoes.

“ A great number of Chipewians who went to Hudson's Bay last summer came this winter to our new establishment at the Lake. They traded largely at the Bay, and were highly satisfied with their reception. They say they had taken seven months to perform their journey ; yet they seemed inclined to return. We gave them large credits which they promised to pay in due time.

“ The men who have remained with the Indians last summer were, and still are, of great injury to the concern by their vicious example and influence.” .....

In his letter to the Agents of the North-West Company, dated 1789. Athabaska. 22nd May, 1789, Mr. A. MacKenzie says :

“ The bearer, Mr. Roderic MacKenzie, goes in a light canoe by *Portage La Loche* a new route that avoids *Portage La Loche*, and, if he finds it practicable, the loaded canoes will pass that way in future. *Portage La Loche* discourages the men, it being  $11\frac{1}{2}$  miles long. We measured it last Fall. I expect he will overtake Mr. McGillivray and take a passage with him to the Portage. He will deliver you all the papers regarding this post ; and give you any other information you may wish respecting the trade.

" You will observe by the papers that there are remaining on hand goods more than sufficient for next year. Therefore, it will be needless to send in more canoes than will be required to carry out the returns. Eight, with three of the five that remain inland, will carry more than the country will produce.

" The greatest dependence of this place at present is on the Peace River. The Chippewans are in the habit of trading in Hudson's Bay.

" Mr. Boyer goes out: I could not prevail on him to remain, but he is to return if he can settle his accounts to his satisfaction at Grand Portage. He is a very fit person for the Peace River; Mr. Vandreil is to pass the summer there.

" Mr. Leroux returned on the 22nd March from the north side of Slave Lake where he met with a great number of Red Knives and Slaves, who traded with him and to whom he promised a *rendez-vous* in the summer there.

" Mr. Leroux arrived on the 22nd March from the other side of Slave Lake where he had seen a great number of Red Knives and Slave Indians. They traded with him and promised to meet him this summer on the west side of the Lake. I intend to pass that way on my voyage for a supply of provisions ".....

I examined two routes this season in hopes of getting rid of *Portage La Loche*. In going out, I went by Little Fish River below *Portage La Loche* and found this route would not answer. However it answered the purpose of a trading establishment.

Going in, I went from *Isle à la Crosse* by *Lac Clair* to the head of the Athabasca River, which I found to be one continued chain of falls and rapids roaring among rocks and precipices entirely unfit for the purpose of navigation, so that we had the greatest difficulty with our canoe to find our way through to the landing place of *Portage La Loche*.

When I left Fort Chipewean for Grand Portage, Mr. MacKenzie was preparing for his first voyage of discovery; on my return, in the beginning of September, I found him at the Forks of the Athabasca River, where he had endeavoured to meet me, which was, as Mr. Small observes, a very joyful meeting, not having heard of him since our separation in the Spring.

He performed his perilous undertaking to the Arctic Ocean without experiencing any material accident, in about one hundred days. After his return from his discovery, he remained at Fort Chipewean where he passed the ensuing winter and kept me with him.....

Letter from Mr. Shaw, dated *Lac d'Orignal* (1), 16th Dec., 1789.

" My dear Rory,

" On the 7th of October, I arrived at the entrance of *Rivière Orignal* and would you believe it, that although it was only five leagues, it took me nine days to transport the goods in it. There are thirty-six rapids in it with very little water. Had there been a possibility of carrying by land the whole length, I would have preferred it, but both sides of the river were entire swamps, &c.

Mr. Shaw  
establishes  
*Lac d'Orignal*  
Fort.

" I brought the goods, however, to a large point on the south-east of the lake and wrought two or three days at felling trees for my house, but, to my great mortification, we then discovered there was no clay to be found within five leagues of us.

" There was no alternative short of a removal to another and more favorable situation at the entrance of a small river on the

(1) The *Lac d'Orignal* Fort is about 200 miles to the west of Edmonton, at the source of the Fraser River. See official map of 1857 prepared by order of the Hon. Mr. Cauchon.



west side of the lake, where I immediately commenced building and had all finished by the 1st November; afterwards got plenty of fish secured to the month of March.

"I discovered four Hudson's Bay men with a band of Assiniboines; I prevailed on the Indians to send them back home. Simon Réaume lost his way going with letters to *Fort des Prairies*. He returned yesterday from there and brought me letters from Montreal, from Grand Portage and from *Fort des Prairies*.

"As for any news I can give you, more likely you know them already. However, I must inform you, beaver has raised considerably in value; *Bon!* Lesieur and Simon Fraser have taken the post of *Rivière des Trembles* and *Portage de l'Île*. They are in partnership. I wish them much joy of their bargain. B... has lost one year's wages for grog drinking. J. Bte. R..... and B..... are both gone to Montreal in irons for theft.

"David Grant would not accept of £100, for which reason our friend Cuthbert was sent in his place. Peter Grant and Desmarais have been sent with a couple of canoes to *Lac Rouge*. Thornburn was left by Mr. Montour at Finlay's old fort *Rivière au Pas*, with two canoes, and some *Sauteux* are with them.

"My friend Thomason is gone to England, and Mr. Halket has taken his place at Pine Island. Alexander Fraser was sent to winter at *Côte des Serpents* and Tourangéau winters at *Lac Vert*. Belleau is engaged for three years, and is now with his friend, Mr. Bergeron, with all his goods. Nothing but ups and downs!

"Both Mr. Montour and Mr. Bergeron inform me that they are ill off for want of provisions; for my part the fish does not agree with me; two and a half fresh beavers is all the fresh meat I have received since I came here, these I killed myself.

The country.

"Perhaps you would wish to know what kind of a country this is. I may say it is entirely composed of mountains, small lakes and small rivers in which there is the greatest quantity of

beavers, martens, &c. The martens are very fine. I have already caught several, but the rascally wolves play the devil with my traps.

"The Plains are about two days and a half march off and *Fort des Prairies* (1) is about eight days distance to the south-east. My house is small but very warm. I must put up with it.".....

.....

"You will, in the next place, wish probably to know how I <sup>A winter-</sup> spend my time; but stop till I smoke my pipe! I rise with the <sup>er's life.</sup> sun and, after *debarbouillant mon visage*, I take a walk to my traps, return to the house, eat *Tollibeas* (2) about nine; then take another walk or work all day at something or other. About 7 p.m., I again eat *tollibee* boiled or roasted and pass the rest of the evening in reading or writing. When Indians are about the house I, of course, attend to the interests of my employers.

"Indeed, my dear man, I find time very long, which I fear may affect my constitution; but there is no help to it. I have worked at beaver lodges, killed a few beavers, I make *traines*, bend snow-shoe frames, and, with perseverance, I'll perhaps learn to handle the *couteau croche*. I was very unfortunate in respect to my nets, four out of seven were entirely rotten. I have made one, seventy-five fathoms long, but the season once passed could not be recalled.

"Please remember me to all the gentlemen I have named, likewise to Mr. Leroux and Mr. Vandreil and to any others who may enquire if Shaw lives.

"Now, my dear Rory, everything has an end, so must this

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(1) Edmonton. The French had a fort called *Fort des Prairies*, on the Saskatchewan, below Fort Nipawi.

(2) A species of white fish of the salmon family.

letter, which I conclude by assuring you that I am with the greatest esteem, dear Rory,

“ Your affectionate friend,—

“ and very humble servant,

“ ANGUS' SHAW ”.

In the Spring, Mr. MacKenzie set out for the Grand Portage. On his way he wrote me among other letters, the following :

.....  
 “ *Pointe aux Tourtes*, 1st July, 1790.

“ Dear Roderic,

“ My last to you was from the *Opas* (1) which I hope you have received ere now. As we expected, but few provisions here ; only 72 bags for 27 canoes. I do not know what quantity the English River canoes may take ; at any rate I think they must have a sufficiency for your's and Leroux's. You will only embark the quantity necessary for your canoe to *Lac La Pluie*.

“ We found a very severe letter here from Mr. McTavish, respecting the Athabasca packs of last year, which were received in bad order partly owing, he says, to St. Germain and partly to us having left them without a proper person to conduct them, and desires that precautions should be taken against recurrence.

“ News! the returns throughout are excellent. Mr. C. Grant made 120 packs and 8 kegs castoreum ; Messrs. Fraser and Lesieur 30 packs ; Bissonette, 53 packs and 3 kegs castoreum ; Mr. R. Grant, 308 packs, 8 kegs castoreum ; St. Germain, at *Lac La Pluie*, 40 packs ;—he is very sick ;—Peter Grant, 26 packs : *La Tour*, 8 packs.

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(1) Near the mouth of Carrot River, on the Saskatchewan or *Rivière du Pas*.

" Mr. Montour is 8 days ahead of us, ten men in his canoe. I have not been able to get one good observation in all Lake Winipeg ; I hope Mr. Vandreil will be more successful. My compliments to him, St. Germain and the men, and believe me to be as usual,

" Your most sincerely,

" ALEX. MACKENZIE "

.....

" Grand-Portage, 16th July 1790.

" Dear Rory,

" We arrived here on the 13th inst. all quite well ; plenty of letters for others but none for me, except a few lines from Mr Robertson and one from Mr. McLeod, but not a word from my uncle .....

" Mr. McTavish is now at the other side sending off canoes ...

" I have not as yet said any thing to Mr. Gregory. Mr. Pangman, I find, pays the two shares..... I do not know what I may do. My expedition was hardly spoken of, but that is what I expected. Shaw returns to his post independent of *Isle à la Crosse*. We take in part of his goods. My compliment, to Mr. Vandreil and Leroux. Nothing more but that I am

Mr Mac-Kenzie's expedition ignored.

" Yours sincerely,

" ALEX. MACKENZIE "

" Fort Chipewean, 2 March 1791.

" Dear Roderic,

" I was agreeably surprised by the arrival of Martin on the 13th ult., but the perusal of your despatches cast a damp on my

spirits, but maturer consideration made me hope that this impending storm may, by some means, be warded off, though perhaps not without great difficulties.....

“ It will be proper to appoint a chief among the Red Knives. I think the English Chief may answer, as none of their own principal men can have sufficient authority. Leaving the returns there, is a thing I cannot think of, the lake will not be clear of ice before the middle of June. ....

“ The answer you are to give the Indians regarding the continuance of this Fort (1) must depend on your present success. It occurs to me now that we will have to establish a Post on this side of the Lake, at the entrance of the Slave River, as near as possible to the fishery discovered last Spring. You will therefore examine the place *en passant*.

“ The Red Knives can have no weighty objection to this; the Slaves deal only in martens. Should they not like the distance, they can make use of the Red Knives as *Carriers*.

River Dis-  
appoint-  
ment,

“ To accommodate the newly discovered, or Beaver Indians, I would propose to send men on a large canoe on a trading voyage down the River Disappointment, (2) where they might give a *rendez-vous*; this you may propose to them.

.....

“ I find by your journal, that you have purchased some curiosities; I wish you will miss nothing in that way, as you know, I am destitute of those articles. It would be unbecoming a North-Wester to appear below so unprovided in that line. Keep for me one of the small musk buffalo horns in its natural state. I think the skin of the buffalo will look curious. Try and procure a fawn robe or two.

(1) Slave Lake Fort.

(2) The Grand River, or MacKenzie River.

"I hope you will make all possible enquiry regarding, the country of the Beaver Indians as well as of the country of the Slaves, and more particularly regarding a great river (1) which is reported to run parallel with, and falls into the sea to the westward of the River in which I voyaged, and commit such information to paper:".....

" Grande Pointe, 18 May 1791.

" Dear Roderic,

"I am sorry it happens to be your turn to remain in land when it is mine to go to Canada, as I think an hour's conversation preferable to ten letters, but those things cannot be helped.

" Endeavour to see the house put in proper order before the arrival of the English, who, if there is room, will lodge at the Fort. The men beg that you will allow their women to remain in their present quarters within the fort.....

Mr. Turner's expedition.

" Your's very sincerely,

" ALEX. MACKENZIE "

" Entrance of *Lac des Bœufs*, 1st June 1791.

" Dear Roderic,

" I met Mr. Turner here this morning. I find the intention of the expedition is discoveries only. I also find the party ill prepared for the undertaking. Mr Ross wishes to obtain storage from you for some baggage, should the expedition proceed fur-

(1) The Yucon or Pelly River.

ther than your place, where, they say, they intend to pass the winter. They have several Indians with them who owe credits to Mr. Small. I enclose you Mr. Small's letter which contains all the news I have from that quarter.

I am, dear Roderic,

"Your's, most sincerely,

"ALEX. MACKENZIE".

"Lac La Pluie, 2 Augt. 1791.

"Dear Roderic,

"I write you a hasty letter on business, but which, I hope, will be sufficient"

"I shall now give you a short account of affairs as they stand at present in the country. You must know that the Concern was continued last year for seven years after the expiration of this.

"We were all bound upon honor not to make it public before a future period that might be agreed upon. I shall make no other apology for keeping it from you. The conditions are as follows: 20 shares, of which:

Messrs. McTavish, Frobisher & Co.....	6 shares.
Mr. Montour.....	2 "
Mr. Grant.....	2 "
Mr. Small.....	2 "
Mr. Gregory.....	2 "
Mr. Pangman.....	2 "
Mr. McGillivray (Mr. McGillivray paid Mr. Pond £800 for his share.).....	1 "
Mr. Sutherland.....	1 "
Myself.....	2 "

for one of which I pay to Mr. McBeath £350 Halifax currency, Value of shares of N. W. Co. 1796.  
 over and above the stock on hand. Mr. Gregory and Mr. Pangman are obliged to purchase theirs from Mr. Holmes and Mr. McLeod. The latter disposed of his for £200 per annum for, I suppose, three or four years; the former is not settled with. Sutherland gets his share out of Messrs. McTavish, Frobisher & Co through the latter's interest. The goods, to be imported on account of the Concern, paying the house below 5 per Cent. at the foot of the invoice; the rest of the expenses as usual, &c."

" Fort Vauligny, 10 Augt., 1791.

" Dear Roderic,

" This is going off very late for *Ile à la Crosse*; indeed, I find every thing late for the season, and am very fearful many of the canoes may not reach their winter quarters *sans misère*; several may be stopped by the ice, which I sincerely wish may not be the case with Athabasca.

" Mr. McLeod was so much hurt at his uncle's conduct (1) that I could not make him any proposal for continuing in the country, but I write to him that if he finds it to his interest to continue for three years more, he will be allowed £200 per annum. This allowance is confined to very few, and I think he will look upon it as a very genteel salary I look upon it more for the benefit of the Company that he should remain in land.

" Messrs. Lesieur and Fraser have continued their agreement with the company for five years longer with this additional advantage, that when the profits do not come up to £200, the Company engage to supply the deficiency for them. Mr. St. Germain has taken *Rivière à la Biche* on the same terms.

(1) Who, probably, did not secure him a share as partner in his place, on retiring.



" Lesieur goes to Canada this year for the benefit of his health. Frédéric, whom you saw at the Portage, goes in for him. Lafrance retires with 12,000 fr. Mr. Leroux is hired for five years at £100 Mr. Thomson also, and I think Cuthbert Grant, is on the condition I offered Mr. McLeod. Mr. Thorburn is for three years; so you see the North is well fixed for some time to come.

" Messrs. McTavish and Small left the other side some time before my arrival from *Lac La Pluie*, for which I am very sorry, because I am afraid I shall not be able to see the former in Canada. He left me a very kind note expressing a desire that I should make Mr. Frobisher's my home while at Montreal.

" I have some idea of crossing the Ocean but this I cannot determine at present. However it is my fixed determination, if I live and be in health, to meet you next Spring at *Lac La Pluie*. Though my absence be thus short, I can assure you that I leave my friends in this country with much pain.

" Give my compliments to Mr. Turner, the English astronomer, and tell him I am sorry I cannot have the pleasure of his company this winter.....

" Forks Peace River, 10 January 1793.

" Dear Roderic,

Mr. A.  
MacKenzie  
prepares  
for his  
overland  
voyage.

" I did not intend to write you before the return of the express, which I am impatient to see arrive.....

" I forgot at the Lake the account taken of the goods last Fall, also Atkinson's epitome of Navigation with \_\_\_\_\_ Chemistry, 2 vols., and send me the sextant (1) with all the quick silver you have, as I have lost all mine.

" I have been so occupied with the company's affairs, that I have not been able to do anything for myself. I worked once

(1) Sir A. MacKenzie's sextant and chronometer are still preserved in the family at Terrebonne.

the distance between the Sun and the Moon for the longitude which gave  $115^{\circ} 25'$ . The situation is so inconvenient, that I have not as yet been able to observe the eclipse of Jupiter's satellistes; the latitude is  $56^{\circ} 34' 30''$ .

"I have not been able to obtain any certain information, thus far, respecting the country behind this.

"I was thinking that if McKay could be spared, he would be of great service to me should I undertake my expedition, but then, I do not see any person to undertake the opening of a route by *Lac des Carriboux*; I would take Finlay, but he is of a weak constitution.

"Wishing you health and happiness and tranquility of mind I remain,

"Dear Roderic, &c.,

"ALEX. MACKENZIE".

This letter is much abridged.

"Forks Peace River, 8th May, 1793.

"Dear Rory,

"I have been so vexed and disturbed of late, that I cannot sit down to any thing steadily. The Indians in general have disappointed me in their hunt. I have had great trouble to procure young men to accompany me in my expedition; none of them like it. I at last prevailed on three; a fourth was desirous to go, but I would not take him, and, to be revenged, he induced my guide to run away, and both have disappeared last evening.

"The two remaining Indians know no more of the country than I do myself, and it may be that they are on the eve of following the example of the others, for no dependence can be put on the promises of any of these people; without Indians I have little hopes of success.

"The guide who deserted was acquainted with another large river to the westward of this, at the distance of two days' march, but the difficulty is to find that river out. At any rate we are too far advanced in the undertaking not to make the attempt.

"In such a state of mind, you may judge if the few letters I have written can be very correct. I send them all open to you, with my seal to close them after perusal. I have only taken copy of Mr. McGillivray's for scarcity of paper. If you could, I wish you would take a copy of those to the agents, to Sutherland, Pangman, Small and Shaw; Pangman's in particular.....  
..... (1)

~~"Without commenting on what you say about Daniel, I shall only mention that I agree with you. I wish him to undertake the discovery of the route by *Lac des Carriboux* to *Fort La Traite* with such means as you can spare. It will be more advantageous than remaining at the Lake, where there will be very little to do, particularly if the Crees remain.~~

"The orders necessary for the Slave country you will have to give, as I shall say nothing to Mr. Livingston on business. I hope, if I live, to be at Athabaska before the second trip from that country, should they make two trips.

"I never was so undecided in my intentions as this year regarding my going to the Portage or remaining in land. I weighed everything in my mind over and over again, and cannot find that my opponents there can do me any injury, without running the risk of impairing their own interest, therefore I ought to fear nothing on that score. But I am greatly in doubt regarding my affairs with Pangman; several points in our agreement may be defective which ought to be corrected, and which I authorise you to see done.".....

(1) One or two pages explaining that it was no fault of his if Mr. Archibald Norman McLeod did not succeed his uncle as partner at the arrangement of 1790.

"With this weight on my mind, and my desire to mix in the business at Grand Portage, I would not have remained in land had I any intention of continuing in the country beyond the ensuing winter. <sup>His dislike of the country.</sup>

"Should I be successful, I shall retire with great advantage; if not, I cannot be worse off than I am at present. I begin to think it is the height of folly in a man to reside in a country of this kind, deprived of every comfort that can render life agreeable, especially when he has a competency to enjoy life in a civilized society, which ought to be the case with me.

"If I can judge Mr. Grant by myself, he will certainly retire this year. Should he pass his turn, he must wait until the next rotation. If his share be given up, Mr. McLeod, with Mr. Fraser will come in. You will observe what I say to Shaw and McGillivray on this subject, which, I hope, will meet your approbation and that you will vote for us both accordingly.....

"9th May. All is ready now for Delorme's departure; he may overtake the other canoes on the way. I intend to leave this in the afternoon; to-morrow will be Friday.

"I made a mistake in calculating the latitude of this place by using miles in lieu of degrees for the refraction. The latitude is  $56^{\circ} 9'$ ; I have not corrected my observations for the long: but find by the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites, that it is  $117^{\circ} 43'$  west. This place is very unfavorable for night observations being frequently cloudy, and unfortunately it happened to be so in the course of the last eclipse.

"Remember me kindly to those of our friends I do not write to, and plead my excuse. I send you a couple of guineas, the rest I take with me to traffic with the Russians. Alex. MacKay (1) desires his compliments to you; I keep him so hard

(1) Mr. Alexander MacKay left the service of the North-West Company in 1810. He joined Mr. Jacob Astor's Company as partner, and was murdered with the rest of the crew of the "Tonquin" by the Indians of the Pacific Coast; see: Franchère.

at work that he has no time to write you. May all happiness attend you ! Adieu !

“ Dear Roderic,

“ Yours unchangeably,

“ ALEX. MACKENZIE.”

The following is an extract of a long letter dated Fort Chipewean 13th January 1794.....

“ I wish we could contrive matters so that we could both go to the Portage. The *Premier* (1) having arrived from England we may expect him at the Grand Portage, where it will be right that all the interested should meet him.

“ I am fully bent upon going down, for I think it unpardonable for any body to remain in this country who can leave it. What a pretty situation I am in this winter, starving and alone, without the power of doing myself or any body else any good ! The boy at *Lac La Loche*, or even my own servant, is equal to the performance of my winter occupation, and the profits, I am afraid, will be so small during the war, that it will not be worth any man's while to remain in it”.

“ Fort Chipewean, 5 March.

“ Dear Roderic,

His Journal.

“ It is now the season I promised to write to you, and would wish I could fulfill another promise I made you last Fall and this winter. I need not tell you I mean “my Journal.” But be assured it is as great a disappointment to me as to yourself, for

(1) Mr. Simon McTavish was very much disliked by the majority of the wintering partners who, on account of his haughty demeanor, called him “The Premier” “The Marquis.”

I wished that you should peruse it at your leisure before any other person, as I expected you would examine the calculations and correct the diction with that freedom which one friend might expect from another.

"Last Fall, I was to begin copying it, but the greatest part of my time was engaged in vain speculation. I took such a habit of thinking so long on a subject, that I sometimes walked backward and forward, musing for hours, at the end of which I could not tell what it was about.

"Did I sit down to write, I was sure that the very things I ought not to have been thinking of would occur to me instead of what I had to do. This one calling me to the garret, another to the cellar, and others to the shop, kept me so busy doing nothing, that all I could do till the time I wrote you, was to look over the men's accounts. In short, my mind was never at ease, nor could I bend it to my wishes.

"Though I am not superstitious, my dreams caused me much annoyance. I could scarcely close my eyes without finding myself in company with the dead. I had visions of late which almost convince me that I have lost a near relation or a friend.

"It was the latter end of January when I began my work, thinking then that I had sufficient time, though the reverse is the case, and I will be satisfied, and so must you, if I can finish the copy for your perusal in the Spring. It is a work, I find, that requires much more time than I was aware of, for it is not at this moment a quarter finished".....

(1)

Mr. McKenzie did not, after this period, return to winter but became one of the agents or directors of the Company, in which capacity he attended yearly the business of the Concern at Grand Portage. He left that year for England and returned during the summer of 1795.

(1) The rest, relating to Mr. Finlay's affairs.

On the 25th October, 1797, he wrote me to inform me of the formation of a concern against the North-West Co. by Messrs. Forsyth, Richardson & Co. and others.....

The old  
Caministiquia route  
reopened.

After a long absence in the Indian territories, I paid this year a visit to Canada. Returning the following Spring, on my first trip from Grand Portage to *Lac La Pluie*, I met a family of Indians at the height of land from whom I accidentally learned the existence of a water communication a little way behind and parallel to this, extending from Lake Superior to Lake *La Pluie*, which is navigable for large canoes and, if adopted, would avoid the Grand Portage.

This was excellent information; of course I immediately engaged one of the Indians to meet me at a certain point in *Lac La Croix*, to show me this new route, but on my arrival, as appointed, the Indian was not there. However, being acquainted with the entrance of the route, I proceeded without him and reached a post of the Company where I procured a guide who accompanied me to Caministiquia on Lake Superior, from whence I soon reached Grand Portage, being the first who reached there from *Lac La Pluie* direct by water communication.

This apparently new route, being at the door of Grand Portage, and formerly used by the French, it is most astonishing that the North-West Company were not acquainted with it sooner.

It may be right to observe here that, after the peace of 1783, the Commissioners appointed by the British and American Governments for settling the boundaries, decided that the Grand Portage was within the limits of American territories.

In 1784, at the establishment of the North-West Company, the Directors, in consequence of the decision of the Commissioners, despatched an expedition to survey a water communication said to exist between *Pays Plat*, in Lake Superior through Nipigon to *Portage de l'Isle* in River Winipic, which, after two months of hard labour, was reported impracticable, so that the North-West

Company were left awkwardly situated, without one opening for their trade, until the present discovery (1).

In the History of Canada, repeated mention is made of the establishment of Caministiquia, and it appears by vestiges and report that the French establishments were destroyed by fire. In the river of Caministiquia, at a short distance above the fort, there is a fall which, in my opinion, is little inferior in splendor to the Falls of Niagara.

In consequence of this discovery, measures were adopted for the removal of the establishment of Grand Portage to Caministiquia, and in 1801, the necessary preparations having been made, Caministiquia became the head quarters of the North-West Company for ever after.

“ Montreal, 22nd June 1799.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favors of the 28th last July and 7th August, in the perusal of which I found much satisfaction and information, and sincerely wish every one of the Gentlemen who manage the Company's concerns in the country would take the same pains.

“ Your observations on the proposed road by Lake *Du Chien* convince me, beyond a doubt, that it would be more advantageous and easy for us than the Grand Portage, and if our application for a grant to the Company succeeds, which I hope it will, I think no time should be lost in moving our place of *rendez-vous*.

“ The threatened opposition have, this year, made a serious attack to us, and I fear that a coalition of interests between the parties opposed to us may render them more formidable, but I still hope the additional resources which the Company will draw from the new discoveries in your department, and by pushing the business by *Fond du Lac*, will compensate us for some years

(1) The exploration made by Mr. Umfreville. See : *Esquisse historique*, page 24.



to come for any thing the new adventurers to the North-West may clip from our wings. The sales are this year good, and I have great hopes they will continue to be so.

From Hallowell's report of the China trade, we know that there is a vent that way for a considerable quantity which, taken out of the London market, will enhance the value of the remainder. Peace cannot be far distant; when it comes, our expenses will be considerably diminished, and if in a few years the Houses in opposition to us get tired of their undertaking, the business may be as good as at any time heretofore. We have enclosed to the agents all the catalogues of sales and every information we could collect for the satisfaction of the gentlemen at the Portage, of which you will no doubt have full communication made to you.....

" I remain, with regard,

" My dear sir,

" Yours sincerely,

" SIMON M<sup>c</sup>TAVISH "

Mr. Mac-  
Kenzie  
leaves the  
N. W. Co.

This year, the engagement of Mr. MacKenzie with the Company expired, and, by some misunderstanding existing between him and his Montreal associates, it was not renewed. He announced at the first general meeting of Partners at the Grand Portage that, feeling himself uncomfortable, he could not think of renewing his engagements and was determined to withdraw from the Concern.

This brought on a serious discussion, and it was resolved unanimously by the wintering partners, that Mr. MacKenzie, having their sole confidence, they could not dispense with his services, therefore that every means should be adopted to retain him, but, unfortunately, the best endeavours of his friends were of no avail, for he retired in November and crossed the Atlantic.

The absence of Mr. MacKenzie from the Concern created a vacancy, and as he had gone to England and probably had entered into other engagements, application was made to me to supply his place which I accepted though with great reluctance.

(1)

“ London, 21 January 1800.

“ Dear Roderic,

“ I wrote you by New York 12th and 27th Dec. and 17th inst. and this is to go by the Packet carrying the January mails under sailing orders for the 25th ”.

This letter continues the same subject as the last. It was impossible for me to join in any hostile measure against the North-West Concern, happening to be a regular partner in them under engagements made by the writer himself, whereas he was free from all these engagements, having not subscribed to them.....

Another letter, dated Montreal, 14th June, begins abruptly under an impression of heavy displeasure, and it appears to be the last to the period after our first separation.

We may here mention that, in 1801, Mr. A. MacKenzie published in England his discoveries, dedicated to the King, who conferred the honor of knighthood upon him, and he appeared in powerful opposition to us under the firm of Alexander MacKenzie & Co. He soon became a member of Parliament for the county of Huntingdon, and, during his attendance in Quebec, renewed his correspondence with me (2)

(1) Then follow several letters to Mr. R. MacKenzie, written : one on board the ship Desire on his way to England, the others from England, and relating to his personal affairs. In one of the latter, he speaks of a Miss McDonald, a charming woman who was married to his friend, Mr. McGillivray, and of a Mrs. MoKenzie, of Three Rivers.

(2) After the death of Mr. Simon McTavish and the union of the two Companies in 1804.

“ Quebec, 24 Jan., 1805.

“ Dear Sir,

Appreciation of  
Quebec.

“ Your favors of the 17th and 21st, I have to acknowledge. Owing to the stormy weather the Post did not come at hand Monday. The people here say they do not remember such a continuance of rough weather.

“ As I keep no copies, I forget how I expressed myself to have given you the idea that I had made a good exchange by coming here.

“ The society is certainly very agreeable, and I feel myself much obliged by the attentions I universally receive, and this the stronger as it is from strangers, persons with whom I am but slightly acquainted.

“ I am heartily tired of legislation. I sincerely wish that those who thought themselves my friends in being the means of getting me so honorable a situation, had been otherwise employed.

“ Very little good is done as yet. They will allow us a jail at the expense of our district, by assessment upon property. No tax will go down with them except upon commerce, which they will have no objection to extend to any amount. For example: it is proposed as a means of building jails to tax the men of the North-West Company: say 1500 winterers at six pounds, and summer men, same number, at three pounds; a duty upon furs and peltries that would amount to £15,000.

“ Yours, &c.,

“ ALEX. MACKENZIE ”.

“ To Roderic McKenzie, Esq.

“ Pallas, Frigate, 3 Nov., 1805.

“ My dear Sir,

“ Although I have not any thing worth troubling you with, I cannot let slip this last opportunity that offers of addressing you on this side of the Atlantic.....

" I see you are anticipating that, let next winter be as it may, you will retire into the bosom of your family. Never mind the folly of the times; for my own part I am determined to make myself as comfortable as circumstances will allow. I have a large field before me. I do not leave Canada without regret.....

" Yours, &c.,

" ALEX. MACKENZIE "

" N. B.—I feel quite comfortable with Lord Cockran, and I look forward to a pleasant passage. You would be well with him, for every moment he can spare from the business of the day is devoted to books, of which he has a choice collection."...

" London, 7th November, 1806.

" My dear Sir,

" Upon my return from Scotland nothing afforded me so much pleasure as your kind favor from Caministiquia of the 26th July ult. which I found here. The subject of it is most interesting and satisfactory. I understand the result of the returns from all quarters is estimated at from £130,000 to £140,000, which must leave a very handsome profit upon the outfit of the year, and no doubt the proposed extensions and exertions will in future increase the profits considerably.....

" When I wrote you respecting the publication of the second edition of my voyages, I had not the most distant idea that it was the intention of the Company to give the History of the North-West, and now, instead of asking your assistance, I offer you mine, as you are the person that seems to take the lead.

Mr. R.  
McKenzie's  
History of  
the North-  
West Co.

"I must, however, take the liberty of reminding you, that the difficulties you have already experienced are trivial in comparison to those you have still to encounter before you get through your undertaking. Your object must be to relate matters as they occurred, which may make more enemies than friends. Besides you will have to advance at least two thousand pounds before you receive a shilling for the work (1).

"I wish you would give instruction to collect from the English Chief and other Chipewans the fullest account they possibly can give of Hearne's journey with them to the North Sea, where, according to what I learn, he never went."

.....

"London, 13th April, 1812.

In which after referring to the Earl of Selkirk's conduct to himself, Sir Alexander MacKenzie says:

Lord  
Selkirk.

"I have finally settled with that Lord. After having prepared a bill to carry him before the Lord Chancellor, it was proposed to my solicitor by the solicitor of His Lordship that one-third of

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(1) The Hon. R. McKenzie was a man of considerable literary attainments and very extensive reading. He appears to have at one time entertained the idea of publishing a History of the Aoriginal tribes of the North-West, as well as a History of the North-West Company. In order to procure the necessary materials for that work, he sent printed circulars to many of the wintering partners, and clerks of the North-West Company, requesting them to collect, and send to him in the form of letters or journals, such information as they could obtain relating to the country in which they were respectively stationed; the natives, their origin, religion, morals and customs; their most eminent chiefs, their government; the origin of their trade with the White, &c.

He received, in response, several reports, "accounts," and journals from the North-West,—some of which are published in this collection—but he does not appear to have carried out his original plan, but seems to have been content with collecting a vast number of most interesting extracts from the books of different travellers and writers, and arranging them so as to prove, and establish a perfect analogy of race between the Aorigines, of the North-West and other nations, ancient and modern, throughout the world, by the similarity of their ideas, customs and modes of living.

the stock that was purchased on joint account before I went to America, amounting to £4,700, and the balance of cash in his Lordship's hands, belonging to me, should be given up to me; of this I accepted, though I might have obliged his Lordship to make over to me one-third of the whole purchase made by him in this stock, which, at one time, I was determined to do, having been encouraged thereto by the House of Suffolk Lane and countenanced by that of Mark Lane (1). But these Houses thought it prudent to desist from any further purchases."

Then Sir Alexander states that by a verbal understanding with Mr. McGillivray, his purchase of the Hudson's Bay stock belonged to the North-West Company, and that, if Mr. McGillivray himself had been there, a sum of thirty thousand pounds might have been invested in that stock; "all which Lord Selkirk purchased, and if he persists in his present scheme, it will be the dearest he yet made.

"He will put the North-West Company to a greater expense than you seem to apprehend, and, had the Company sacrificed £20,000, which might have secured a preponderance in the stock of Hudson-Bay Co., it would have been money well spent."

Sir Alexander then speaks of his marriage with Miss MacKenzie, of C..... (2) and his purchase of the estate of Avock.

"Avock, 14th January, 1819.

"My dear Sir,

"When I look at the date of your letter—nearly two years old—I am quite ashamed of myself.....

(1) The North-West Company's Agents in London.

(2) Illegible.

“Occurrences with Lord Selkirk and the Hudson's Bay Company are so various and numerous that it would require a volume to detail and comment upon them; most of the prominent events I learn from the public prints.

“Upon the whole they have not turned out so disastrous to the North-West Company as might naturally have been apprehended. The losses sustained in the country, though severe and serious, have been, in a considerable degree, compensated by the high prices obtained for the furs, the sales of which were certainly managed with great judgment in London.

“The returns from all quarters, I should suppose, would have brought £50,000 more than they were estimated; similar prices, I understand, were expected this year, and it is said the returns are good. This, with the affairs of the interior reduced to their usual state, is a cheering prospect.

“The North-West agreement is now drawing to a close, I should not be surprised to see a serious change take place in the direction of its affairs. To me this can be of no consequence, as I think it would be unjust, as well as impolitic, to continue me, or any other person, upon the establishment as Dormant Partners. I shall be most happy however to see the business continued and carried on with vigour

“They will have a large amount to account to me; the present agents do not seem disposed to reduce it, as they have not paid me a shilling of principal or interest since I became a partner under the firm of “Sir Alexander MacKenzie & Co.”

“I hope that, before now, you have discovered the annual income of your estate to exceed your expectations. I should not be sorry to hear of your having disposed of it advantageously; perhaps you might think of investing it in your native land. Follow the example of our old friend M. McGillivray who, I find, has bought an estate in Argyshire for £20,000.

"I trust Mrs. McKenzie (1) and your young family are continuing in their usual good health. Marguerite (2) must now be a stout lady, and my name-sake (3) about finishing his education for college. Had you sent him to this country it might have been as well.

"What do you think of sending Roderick-Charles here when he is fit? We have two good academies in this county, at Thain and at Fortrose. I shall have a little fellow, if God spare him, this day eleven months-old, that would accompany him.

"Our little girl is very thriving. Her mother has not recovered her usual health since her last confinement, and I have, at last, been overtaken with the consequences of my sufferings in the North West.

"I think it is of the same nature as Mr. McGillivray's complaint, but it has not yet arrived at a severe crisis. I have, in <sup>Sir A. Mac-Kenzie's</sup> illness, obedience of orders, become a water drinker and milk sop. I have not tasted wine, spirituous or malt liquor for several months, which I think has been of service to me.

"The symptoms of the disorder are very disagreeable and most uncomfortable. The exercise of walking, particularly uphill, brings on a headache, stupor or dead pain which at once pervades the whole frame, attended with listlessness, and apathy

(1) Mrs. R. McKenzie was the daughter of Mr. Charles-Jean-Baptiste Chaboulez, an old North-Wester who died at Torrebanno 1809, and the sister of Mrs. Simon McTavish and Mrs. Joseph Bouchette.

(2) Miss Marguerite McKenzie was married to the late Mr. Robert Lester Morrourh, prothonotary of the district of Montreal. One of his daughters is now living in Terrebanno.

(3) Lt.-Col. Alexander MacKenzie, who married a Miss Desrivieres and resided in Terrebanno where he died in 1862. The eldest of his sons, Alexander, resides at St. Canute in the county of the Two Mountains; another son, James, joined the Papal Zouaves and received the Cross of Honor for his gallant conduct at Rome; he is at present employed in the postal service at Montreal. Lt.-Col. McKenzie's eldest daughter was married to Mr. L. R. Masson; another daughter to Mr. Cyrille Tessier, of Quebec.



which I cannot well describe. Exercise in a carriage, if not violent, has a beneficial effect. The great doctor Hamilton, of Edinburgh, calls it a shake of the constitution.

“Although the usual time of arrivals from Canada is past, I have not yet lost the hope of hearing from your brothers Henry (1) and James (2). They are, I fear, retaliating on my own neglect for not being more punctual in my correspondence.

“By a letter from Angus Bethune, I heard of Donald's (3) situation on the Columbia. It is one of considerable personal risk but advantageous, had he been able to reach the proper hunting ground.

(1) Mr. Henry McKenzie was a man of considerable administrative abilities, and managed the affairs of the North-West Company, as secretary, for a number of years. He was also entrusted with the management of the estates of Mr. Joseph Frbisher and of Mr. Simon McTavish, and, in that latter capacity, held the agency of the seignior of Terrebonne. He married, in 1815, Miss Bethune, daughter of Rev. Mr. Bethune, and died in 1832, leaving several children, two of whom: Mr. Simon McTavish MacKenzie, of Montreal, and Mrs. Stow, of Toronto, are still living.

(2) Mr. James McKenzie entered the North-West Company's service in 1794. Five years after, he had charge of Fort Chipewean with Mr. Wentzel. In 1802 he was taken in as a partner and came down to Quebec, where he settled and had charge of the old King's Posts leased by the Company. He appears to have entertained a very deep dislike of the Indians of the North-West and of the *voyageurs* who seem to have reciprocated his feelings. Mr. McKenzie died in Quebec in 1849 leaving four children: two sons and two daughters. His only surviving son, Mr. Keith McKenzie, is now employed by the Hudson's Bay Company in the Straits of Hudson Bay, and one of his daughters was married to Mr. Patrick, formerly Clerk of the House of Commons; the other is the widow of Lieutenant-Colonel McDougall, of Kingston.

(3) Mr. Donald McKenzie, brother of the Honorable R. McKenzie, left the North-West Company about 1809 and joined Mr. Jacob Astor's Company as a partner. At the dissolution of the latter, he returned to his old friends and continued to enjoy their confidence as he had retained that of Astor. His thorough knowledge of the country south of the Rocky Mountains, his indomitable energy, induced the Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company to entrust to him, in 1822, the difficult task of establishing a trading post on *La Fourche des Gros Ventres* (Chesterfield House), among the Pawnees and *Gros Ventres* who had already plundered him a few years before and who threatened to do the same if he returned.

By his energy and skill Mr. McKenzie succeeded in a task which many considered hopeless, and was rewarded by receiving the Governorship of Assiniboia or Red River which he held during eight years to the satisfaction of all.

In 1833, he left the North-West and settled at Mayville in the State of New York where he lived much respected, and died in 1851.

"It is now believed there are plenty beaver, in that country, and it will be very hard if it is wrested from us through the ignorance of our negotiators. That crafty, cunning statesman Gallatin,—Astor's friend,—was the principal negotiator on the part of the Americans: He would be too many for our people who are governed more by theory than practice....."

"Lady MacKenzie is sitting by me and the children are playing on the floor; the former joins me most cordially in kind regards to you, Mrs. McKenzie and your young family.

"Yours very truly and sincerely,

"ALEX. MACKENZIE".

"Montreal, 12th May, 1820.

"Dear Sir,

"It is with the deepest regret I have to inform you of the <sup>His</sup> death, death of my uncle Sir Alexander MacKenzie....."

"Accompanied by Lady MacKenzie and children, he was on his way from Edinburgh to Rosshire and was suddenly taken ill at Mulnain, near Dunkeld, on the 11th March and expired the following morning.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Your obd. Servt.,

"KENNETH DOWIE".

"The Hon. Rod. McKenzie,

"Terrebonne.

"Lachine, 10th January, 1827.

"My dear Sir,

"Two days previous to receipt of your valued communication of the 6th instant, I was apprized by a very polite note from

Lord Dalhousie, of the trouble you have taken in regard to my magisterial preferment, for which I return you my best thanks; and I beg to repeat to you, what I have already assured His Lordship, that my utmost ability shall be exercised to discharge the duties of the office about to devolve on me in such a manner as will afford satisfaction to His Lordship, and do credit to your recommendation; moreover, that, in this Province, His Majesty has not a more devoted and loyal subject, nor is there a more ardent and disinterested admirer of His Lordship's administration, of his public and private life than I have the honor of being.

"I am sorry to learn that my young friend Alexander is still confined, but trust his complaint will not be of a long duration; for these last few days I have been a prisoner myself, owing to a severe cold which will render it necessary for me to postpone a trip I meant to have started on to-morrow for Upper Canada.

"You must have heard that little or nothing was done at the last meeting of the creditors, the object of which was to know the sentiments of those who object to sign the deed of assignment and to point out the consequences to themselves of persisting in a refusal.

"I shall not be able to get to Quebec before the 19th or 20th February, and my stay there cannot exceed 3 or 4 days. Immediately on arrival, I shall find your note; my quarters will be "Paynes Hotel" (1) so that we are likely to be near neighbours as I understand you usually put up there.

The Beaver  
Club.

"Your brother and a few North-Westers have promised to assist me to day in discussing the merits of a roasted beaver; I shall sound them about the plan of renewing the Beaver Club, but fear the season is now too far advanced to do any thing on it this winter. Accept my best thanks for your attention in sending me the rules.

(1) Now, the Albion Hotel, in Palace street.

"Mrs. McKenzie expressed a wish to see Mrs. D. McKenzie's letter to me; the tattered state in which it is will be accounted for when I say that in the act of opening it on receipt we were mounting a strong rapid in River Winnipeg. The canoe filled, sunk and passengers, papers, crew and baggages were all afloat in a moment, and with much difficulty saved.

"Please offer my kindest respects to Mrs. McKenzie and the rest of your household and believe me to be, with much regard.

"My dear Sir,

"Yours very truly,

"GEO. SIMPSON".

"Roderick McKenzie, Esq.,

"Terrebonne.

"My dear Sir,

"I met my young friend Alexander in the street yesterday and was rejoiced to learn from him that you, Mrs. McKenzie and family were quite well. Your brother Donald, his lady and young folks were in high health and spirits in the month of May last when I passed ten days most agreeably with them at Red River. His government is the most easy under the sun; he settles the most knotty points with a joke and a laugh, seated on a mortar opposite the gate of his fort, and is more beloved and respected by his subjects than words can tell; he is not so stout as he was, but much more healthy and looks as if he would live for ever.

Mr. Donald  
MacKen-  
zie, Gov-  
ernor of  
Red River.

"I understand you are to be in town soon, if so, I should be most happy to have the opportunity of shaking you by the hand. In the course of a few weeks more I shall be off for England and until then will be much occupied, otherwise I should do myself the pleasure of paying you my respects at Terrebonne.

In Spring, it is probable I shall be able to tell you all about your Ullapool friends, as it is my present intention to spend a few weeks there.

“ Believe me, with regard,

“ My dear Sir,

“ Yours most truly,

“ GEO. SIMPSON ”.

“ Lachine, 4th Sept., 1829 ”.

Arrangements of the Proprietors, clerks, interpreters, &c., of  
the North-West Company in the Indian Departments-1799,  
(the old Company).

*Athabaska.*

	G. P. Currency.
John Finlay, proprietor.	
Simon Frasers.....wages	1,200
James MacKenzie.....	300
Duncan Livingston.....	1,200
John Stewart.....	240
James Porter.....	480
John Thompson.....	240
James MacDougall.....	60
G. F. Wintzel.....	240
John Heinbrucks.....	500
	4,460
Equipments and necessaries for 9 clerks at £20....	2,160

*Upper English River.*

Angus Shaw, proprietor.	
Donald MacTavish, proprietor.	
Alexander MacKay.....wages	1,200
Antoine Tourangeau.....	1,000
	2,200
—Carried forward.....	6,620

	G. P. Currency.	
Brought forward.....	2,200	6,620
Joseph Cartier.....	1,000	
Simon Réaume.....	600	
	<hr/>	3,800

*Lower English River.*

Alexander Fraser, proprietor.		
John MacGillivray.....wages	360	
Robert Henry.....	360	
Louis Versailles.....	800	
Charles Messier.....	600	
Pierre Hurteau.....	650	
	<hr/>	2,770
Equipments and necessaries for 5 clerks.....		1,200

*Fort Dauphin.*

A. N. McLeod, proprietor.		
Hugh McGillis.....wages	1,200	
Michel Allary.....	1,000	
Alexander Farguson.....	120	
Edward Harrison.....	1,200	
Joseph Grenon.....	900	
François Nolin.....	240	
Nicholas Montour.....	180	
	<hr/>	4,840
Equipments and necessaries for 7 clerks at £20...		1,680

*Upper Fort des Prairies and Rocky Mountains.*

Daniel MacKenzie, proprietor.		
John MacDonald.....		
James Hughes.....wages	1,200	
Louis Chatellain.....	1,800	
	<hr/>	
Carried forward.....	3,000	20,910

REMINISCENCES

63

G. P. Currency.

Brought forward.....	3,000	20,910
James King .....	1,200	
François Decoigne.....	1,000	
Pierre Charette.....	800	
Pierre Jerome .....	750	
Baptiste Bruno.....	800	
David Thompson. ....	1,200	
J. Duncan Campbell.....	1,000	
Alexander Stewart.....	240	
Jacques Raphael.....	1,200	
François Deschamps.....	550	

*Lower Fort des Prairies.*

Pierre Belleau.....	2,400	
Baptiste Roy.....	600	
J. B. Filande.....	750	
Baptiste Larose .....	600	
	—————	16,090
Equipments and necessaries for 16 clerks, &c., at £20...		3,840

*Upper Red River.*

John Macdonell, proprietor.		
George MacKay.....wages	720	
J. Macdonell, jnr.....	240	
Joseph Auger.....	750	
Pierre Falcon.....	750	
François Mallette.....	240	
William Munro.....	120	
André Poitvin.....	750	
	—————	3,570
Equipments and necessaries for 7 clerks at £20.		1,680
		—————
Carried forward.....		46,090



G. P. Currency.

Brought forward..... 46,090

*Lower Red River.*

Charles Chaboillez, proprietor.

Alexander Henry..... wages	1,200
J. B. Desmarais.....	800
François Delorme.....	1,000
Michel Coleret.....	750
Antoine Dejarlet.....	700
Louis Giboche.....	750

5,200

Equipments and necessaries for 6 clerks at £20.... 1,440

*Lac Winipic.*

William MacKay, proprietor.

John Cameron..... wages	240
Donald MacIntosh.....	600
Benj. Frobisher.....	120
Jac. Dupont.....	800
Joseph Laurent.....	1,000
Gabriel Attina.....	1,200
François Amiot.....	750

4,710

Equipments and necessaries for 7 clerks at £20.... 1,680

*Nipigon.*

Duncan Cameron..... wages	2,400
Ronald Cameron.....	1,200
Dugald Cameron.....	600
Jac. Adhémar.....	720
J. Bte Chevalier.....	750

5,670

59,120

REMINISCENCES

65

G. P. Currency.

Brought forward.....	5,670	59,120
Allen MacFarlane.....	500	
J. Bte Pominville.....	1,000	
Fred. Shults.....	960	
	<hr/>	8,130
Equipment and necessaries for 7 clerks at £20...		1,680

Note : Fred's equipment is included in his wages.

Pic.

J. B. Perrault.....wages	900	
Augustin Roy.....	600	
	<hr/>	1,500

*Michipicoton and the Bay.*

Lemaire St-Germain.....wages	1,200	
Baptiste St-Germain.....	1,200	
Léon Chénier.....	750	
	<hr/>	3,150

*Sault and Sloop "Otter."*

John Burns.....wages	1,500	
John Bennet.....	1,800	
	<hr/>	3,300

*South of Lake Superior.*

Michel Cadotte, partner.		
Michel Cadotte, partner.		
Simeon Charrette.....	}	2,000
Charles Gauthier.....		
Pierre Béjargé (Baillargé).....		

*Fonds du Lac.*

John Sayer, proprietor.		
J. B. Cadotte.....wages	1,800	
Charles Bousquet.....	900	
	<hr/>	
Carried forward.....	2,700	78,880

	G. P. Currency.	
Brought forward.....	2,700	78,880
Jean Coton.....	750	
Ignace Chénier.....	600	
Joseph Réaume.....	1,000	
Eustache Roussin.....	750	
Vincent Roy.....	750	
		6,550
Equipments and necessaries for 7 clerks at £20...		1,680

*Lac La Pluie.*

Peter Grant, proprietor.

Arch. MacLellan.....wages	960	
Charles Latour.....	950	
Mich. Machard.....	700	
		2,610

*Grand Portage.*

Doctor Munro.....wages	1,200	
Charles Hesse.....	600	
Zacharie Clouthier.....	750	
Antoine Colin.....	600	
Jacques Vandreil.....	600	
François Boileau.....	1,000	
Bruce.....	300	
		5,050
Equipments omitted.....		3,000
		97,770

This list was found among the Hon. R. MacKenzie's papers, and was probably prepared by him on his appointment as one of the Agents of the Old North-West Company, 1799.

MR W. F. WENTZEL

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LETTERS

TO THE

HON. RODERIC MCKENZIE

1807-1824



Mr. Willard-Ferdinand Wentzel was a Norwegian. He entered the service of the North-West Company in 1799 as an apprentice clerk, and spent most of his life in the Athabasca and MacKenzie regions, where he endured more than his share of the hardships of a "winterer's" life in the Northern Departments.

He was, it appears, a man of small stature, very unhandsome, but highly intelligent and of a jovial, keen but sarcastic turn of mind; quick at finding out people's weak points and foibles, and taking great delight in mimicking them. This disposition of his deprived him of the kindly support of many who might doubtless have helped him on, and contributed possibly to prevent his promotion in the service of the Company.

Mr. George Keith, one of the "Partners" in the North-West Company and, later, one of the Chief Factors in the Hudson Bay Company, in his letters to Mr. Roderic McKenzie, speaks in the most complimentary terms of his long years of service and of the hardships he endured.

Mr. Ross Cox, in his book "Adventures on the Columbia River," says that he met him in 1811, and travelled with him from Lake *La Pluie* to Fort William, where Wentzel was going to seek for justice from the

Company. Mr. Cox speaks of him as an active and enterprising trader, a man of great integrity, whose name was ever omitted from the list of favorite clerks because he had no relatives to press his claims. He had, in consequence, the mortification of seeing younger men preferred to him, several of whom had never suffered the pangs of hunger in the service of the Company.

He returned from Fort William with an engagement for three years, at the maximum salary allowed to clerks,—two hundred pounds a year,—but never after felt comfortable in the service and always regretted he could not leave the country.

Mr. Wentzel had lived twenty years amongst the Northern tribes when Sir John Franklin undertook his memorable expedition by land to the Arctic Ocean. Wentzel's knowledge of the Natives, of their language, manners and customs caused him to be requested to accompany the expedition, in order to superintend the *voyageurs* and take charge of, and propitiate the Indians who had joined it.

The want of supplies and provisions, however, soon obliged Franklin to dispense with the services of the Indians and to continue his journey with the *voyageurs* only. After reaching the shores of the Arctic Ocean, Mr. Wentzel was sent back to Great Bear Lake with despatches from the Commander, and was requested to collect provisions at Fort Enterprise for the return of the party. Finding neither game nor hunters at Great

Bear Lake, he pushed on to Great Slave Lake, but with no better success, and he soon after heard of the terrible disaster which had befallen the expedition.

It was generally believed in the North-West that Sir John Franklin paid no attention to the advice of Mr. Wentzel and of other winterers of the North-West and Hudson Bay Companies, who warned him against continuing the expedition before having provided, either *en cache* or otherwise, the necessary supplies for the return. The expedition was in a starving condition from its beginning, and it proved very fortunate for Mr. Wentzel and the four *voyageurs* who accompanied him, that he was sent back.

Mr. Wentzel was a musician; Franklin even says, "an excellent musician!" This talent of his brightened the long and dreary hours of his life and contributed to keep all cheerful around him. A collection of the *voyageurs* songs made by him is in our possession, but they are mostly obscene and unfit for publication.

Mr. Wentzel, while at Great Bear Lake, took, as a wife, a *Montagnais* woman who gave him two children: a daughter married, first to a Canadian named Larivière, then to a half breed, Louison Goulet, and whose children are settled at Lake Manitoba Mission; and a son, Alexander, born at *Ile à la Crosse*, who married a half breed named Laferté. Alexander Wentzel was a carpenter; he built the church at St. Norbert, 1855, and left four sons, all living at St. Agathe.





LETTER N° 1, (1807).

The country around the Grand River.—Natural productions.—Animals and birds.—Modes of hunting.—The climate.—The Natives, their dress, appearance, habits, religion, tools and weapons.—The *engagés* of the North-West Company.—History of the trade at Grand River.—Vocabulary of the Beaver language.

Nos. 2 AND 3, (1809 AND 1810.)

Confirming the former. (Not printed.)

N° 4, (1811).

Sufferings and Starvation.—Music in the North-West.

N° 5, (1814).

Indian conspiracies against the traders.—The decline of "far-famed Athabaska, the school of the North."—The Athabaska library.—Great Bear Lake.—The Sea tribe, or *Sharp-eyes*.

N° 6, (1815).

Rejoicings in the North-West on the cessation of hostilities with the United States.—Decline of the trade in the North.—The MacKenzie River Department abandoned.

N° 7, (1816).

Quarrels with the Hudson Bay Company.—Opposition in Athabaska.—Disaster to the Hudson Bay Company's people.

N° 8, (1818).

Successful trade in Athabaska.—The Red River settlement.

N° 9, (1819).

Formidable preparations of the Hudson Bay Company under Messrs. Colin Robertson and John Clarke.—Mr. Robertson, a prisoner at Fort Chipewyan.—Success of the North-West Company.—The MacKenzie River trade resumed.—Wages of clerks and men.

N° 10, (1820).

The Grand Rapid outrage.—Open war between the Hudson Bay and North-West companies; its effects on the Natives.—Sufferings and death of Mr. Benjamin Frobisher.—The Red River settlement.—Arrival of Lieutenant Franklin at Fort Chipewyan, on his Land Artic expedition; instructions from Mr. Simon MacGillivray to the partners and clerks of the North West Company.

N° 11, (1821).

Mr. Wentzel is attached to the Land Artic Expedition under Lieutenant Franklin.—Intense cold.—Affairs in Athabaska.—Mr. Simpson takes charge of the Hudson Bay Company's interests in the North-West.

N° 12, (1822).

Franklin's Land Artic Expedition having reached the Polar Sea, Mr. Wentzel returns with despatches. He winters at Fort Chipewyan, where he receives news of the disastrous result of the Expedition.

N° 13, (1823).

Divers Artic expeditions spoken of.—Disclosures on Lieut. Franklin's expedition. Misconduct of the officers.—Effect of the coalition of the Hudson Bay and North-West companies on their employés in the North-West.

N° 14, (1824).

Further disclosures relating to Lieut. Franklin's expedition.—Contradictory statements of Doctor Richardson relating to Robert Hood's death and that of Michel, the Iroquois.—Altered condition of the country after the coalition.—Different plans proposed for exploring the unknown parts of the Mac-Kenzie River Department.

TO LIEUT. JOHN MCKENZIE, (1818).

Roman Catholic clergy sent to Red River.—Miserable condition of the colonists in Red River



LETTER No. 1.

Forks MacKenzie River, March 27th, 1807.

Rod. McKenzie, Esq.,

Dear Sir,

Agreeably to the request you intimated to me last Fall per a printed memorandum, I have the pleasure to forward the following collection, which is the best the inconveniences arising from a dull and illiterate capacity allow me to make. These considerations will induce you, I hope, to overlook the many errors and inaccuracies I may have committed in the undertaking. My desire to please you will excuse my attempting what is so much above my abilities to handle so as to prove entraining to you and creditable to myself.

The Grand River (1) which obtains its waters from Slave Lake <sup>The Grand River.</sup> and which empties into the Pacific ocean (2), is perhaps one of the longest and most beautiful rivers in the North. It steers a straight course, with little variation, and has a smooth tho' strong current, which is interrupted by only two or three rapids of no consequence and of no length. Islands lie interspersed here and there and contain a good stock of wood. Thus it glitters through an ungrateful country, enjoying the waters of three middling large rivers. It is about half to three quarters of a league broad at its widest place. The banks on both sides

(1) MacKenzie River.

(2) Error common to many at the time in the North-West.

are high and barren, which is supposed to be occasioned by the great fires made in the Spring season by the inhabitants to clear the country of underwood, in order to enjoy more ease when hunting.

The surface of the country is little elevated at this place to what it is at some distance from this downward, where, I am told, the banks are exceedingly high and rocky. The whole country from this to Slave Lake is marshy and swampy. At a short distance in land, it is interspersed, here and there, with mountains, hills and valleys.

The soil.

The soil is of a greyish cast, being a mixture of earth, clay and sand, which the Canadians tell me can produce wheat, oats, peas, barley and turnips; vegetables decrease in growth.

Principal mountains.

The principal mountains form no connection with each other. The Rocky Mountain, the most extensive in the country, lies on the south side of Grand River and runs north and south in direction, at a little distance from Grand River, two days below this. From thence it continues, without varying its course, to the River *au Liard*—formerly called Grand River Forks—and from thence in different directions to the upper part of Peace River. Its shape is very irregular and its extent unknown. I am told that this mountain is inhabited by several tribes of Savages, namely, *Nahanies*, *Dahoteena* and *Nombahoteenais*, besides many others who are unacquainted with white people. The only information I can get concerning these Natives is that they inhabit these rocks, live upon carribou and goat flesh and make war upon each other.

The next largest mountain is the Horn Mountain which lies on the north side of the Grand River and runs from north-east to south-west. This mountain takes its rise somewhere near Mountain Island in Slave Lake, and ends about a league below this, when it steers off again in a north-east direction. Its general direction is upon a straight line, and its height, as well as that

of the Rocky Mountain, is unknown. The latter is so high that its summit is sometimes invisible for several days and hidden in the clouds. Its composition is rocks from which it derives its name, while Horn Mountain is composed of a marshy soil and derives its name from the number of Carribou horns found upon it. Besides these mountains, there are an infinite number of inferior ones which lie here and there without any connexion with the two above, or among themselves.

As to volcanoes, there are some along the North side of the Grand River, at a little distance this side of Bear Lake River, and which are visible from this river. From these, issue several columns of smoke which have a strong smell of coal and sulphur. I was told by Mr. John Thain, one who had personally inspected them, that the fire was not above one foot under ground; the flames are pale and the smoke black; the holes from which the blazes appear are small and numerous. No irruptions, such as are experienced in the Eastern hemisphere, ever occurred here to the knowledge of the Indians. Volcanoes.

Ores of two kinds only are known among the Natives, and these in the Rocky Mountain; one is supposed to be silver, a piece of which was traded by one Mr. Duncan Livingston, who transmitted it to the Gentleman Proprietor of the North-West Company who resided in Athabasca in the year 1796; since then, no account of the dimensions of the mine from which it came have been received. Ores and minerals.

The other is a metal which, in former times, the inhabitants made use of to strike fire, and whose sparks when struck upon a flint are scarcely visible. This ore is of a fine colour and is supposed to be a mixture of steel and earth and is exceedingly weighty. It is found in the small creek which falls into the *Rivière au Liard* about four days march from this place.

Its mineral produce is coal, black lead of a very fine cast, orange coloured earth which, when heated by a fire, becomes red



and thus serves as vermilion to the inhabitants; flint stone in abundance, but these, with the ore, are the produce of the River *au Liard*.

Trees and plants.

The large wood is the red and white pine, cypress, birch, poplar and *liard*; the under wood is the elder, willow, red wood, and swamp tea, none of which, except the red wood, bear fruit. The plants known to me are the *plantin*, wild mint, mountain-tea which bear fruit, wild sives, liquorice roots, sarsaparilla and *queue de rats*, besides many others, the names and use of which I am unacquainted with.

Fruits.

The fruits of this solitary region are the *poire*, gooseberry, raspberry, strawberry, moose-deer berry, rose buttons, red and black currants, thimbleberry, huckleberry, cranberry, crowberry, pithagomine, or *queue d'épouillie*, juniperberry, bearberry, choak-berry and another berry, the name of which I do not know except in the Indian language, which they call *ouh-ka chwa*. They bud about the latter end of May, flower about the 15th of June and ripen near the 20th August, when they are deemed wholesome to the body and delicious to the taste.

Dyes.

The dyes made use of by the Indians to stain porcupine quills and feathers, which are the only thing they stain, are the roots of a plant which the Canadians call *Savoyan*; its colour is of an orange cast. This root, boiled with cranberry, dyes a beautiful light red; the dyes for yellow are another small foot which they gather in marshy plains.

Insects.

The insects in this country are the same as in Canada, except that the *Criquet* is not to be found.

Birds.

The water fowls are: the great and small swan, large and little bustard, grey and white goose; among ducks, the large grey duck, spoon bill duck, *Peigne en queue*, *Kanhanwee*, *Pétoine*, small grey duck and water fowl, loon; grey, white and black headed gulls; sea and land plovers, snipe and crane, besides the pelican.

The land birds are the eagles; the fish, musquito and night hawks; grey and white owls, crows, pheasants; the wood, swamp and white partridge, king-fishers, robins, black birds, nightingales, yellow birds, besides many others whose names I cannot make out.

The large and small animals are elks, large and small carri- Animals.  
 boux; grey, black and red bears; the goat, besides another animal which is peculiar to the Rocky Mountains. This animal, the Indians tell me, is about the size and bulk of an elk, with short legs, a long neck, and has two great horns like a stag under which two small ones sprout out. The flesh of this beast, they say, has a very fine taste. Though I have never seen any, I have tasted the grease of the back fat, and found it in taste and flavour equal to the moose deer *Dépouille* (1), the grease somewhat more oily; its colour is white.

The other animals are the beaver, otter, wolverine, wolf, lynx; red, grey, white and black foxes, porcupine, ground hog, marten, mink; common red, ground and flying squirrels; hares, bats and mice.

Modes of hunting are numerous. In the spring, when a crust Modes of hunting.  
 is formed upon the snow, the Indians frequently run down the elk and carribou, which they fatigue so much that they often kill them with their spears. In summer and winter, they pursue them with dogs into snares; these are ropes about three fathoms long made of large *babiche* well twisted with a spring knot at each end. These they tie upon a small tree on the tracks of the animals which, when taken, carry off the sling until the little tree to which it is fastened happens to catch against or between two large trees. The animal finding itself stopped, makes such efforts as to put an end to its life. The flesh is then very bad, being overheated and full of blood.

(1) Fat on the ribs between flesh and skin.

In the rutting season, which always happens in autumn, the natives rub the shoulder blade of an elk against a tree, at the same time imitating the cry of an elk; this brings the animal quite close, when they are easily killed with bows and arrows. The chase of the caribou in rutting season is quite different. When a man kills a female, he raises the skin off the head from the thickest part of the neck to the extremity of the nose, this is stuffed with straw or rather with hay and put to dry. When perfectly dry they fix the horns, which had been severed from the head, in their proper place and then go hunting. They run their arm in this skin which is so well arranged that it perfectly imitates the animal itself. When they see a drove of caribou in the distance they wave this skin and imitate the cries and tricks of the animal and bring the males close to them.

.....

Their mode of hunting beaver is to make wooden traps upon the lodges in the fall, and in winter they trench the beaver; all other animals, they take in snares.

Lakes.

Lakes are numerous on the north side of the Grand River. The principal ones and those which offer the best fisheries are: the Great Willow, the Porcupine and Long Lakes. The first two are connected by a narrow strait; the latter is near Bear Lake from which it is separated by a narrow neck of land only. All these lakes empty into the Grand River. The former is about 40 leagues from this place, in a northern direction, the latter is at a much greater distance in the same direction. These lakes are fishing abodes for many families of Natives; none of them are of any considerable extent. The Long Lake is supposed to be the largest and yet it is computed at about twenty to twenty-five leagues long by about three broad.

On the south side of the Grand River, there are only two of any note, the first is the Trout Lake, not far in land from the entrance of the Grand River. We formerly got a great quantity

of peltries from this lake, it being a fishing place for a few Indian families. The other is the Willow-Lake which lies north-west from this Fort at a distance of about twenty leagues; this lake is a middling size lake, supposed to be about forty miles broad by sixty long. Besides the above mentioned, there are numberless small lakes dispersed here and there on the north side which however form no connection, tho' they are placed very near each other.

The rivers of any note which form a junction with the Grand Rivers. River, are the River *au Liard* (formerly called the Grand River Forks). This river comes from the southward and derives its waters from the Rocky Mountains and the discharges of small lakes. The next is the outlet of the Great Willow Lake which falls in with the Grand River about one hundred and fifty miles below this place; the last is Bear River; all three are shallow and rapid. The River *au Liard* which is considered the largest is so shallow that Mr. Keith, who has charge of a Fort in the upper part, had the greatest difficulty in reaching his winter quarters last fall with six pieces of goods only in his canoe (1). This river produces the mines and minerals before mentioned and the best peltries that are taken out of this Department.

Rapids are numerous in these three last mentioned rivers, but there are no portages. In the Grand River, no cataracts are to be met with and but two rapids which, I have already observed, are not dangerous. The most dangerous is a place called The Falling Beaver below the Rocky Mountain, and is a kind of whirlpool at high water only and is then perilous to cross; if there be any other doubtful places they are unknown to me. The nature of these waters I believe to be wholesome; they are clear as well in summer as in winter.

With regard to mineral springs, I have heard of but one which is in the Rocky Mountains, in the upper part of the River *au Liard*: <sup>Poisonous spring.</sup>

(1) See Mr. George Keith's letter, 7th January, 1807.

the inhabitants tell me, it is venomous, two of them having drank of it, both died. It attacks the nerves and brings on a slow fever, and then death, but without any extraordinary agony. The water of this spring is clear, and very cold, even in the greatest heat of Summer.

## Fishes.

The different sorts of fish to be met with in the lakes and rivers of these deserts are the large and the salmon trout, *inconnu*, (1) white fish, white and red carp, pickerel, pike, blue fish, tollibý and *Loche*.

The modes of fishing practised by the Natives consist in nets and hooks; the former made of the rind of the willow which is twisted and then made like the nets made in Canada; their average length is forty yards, the height ten yards, and the meshes four and a half inches. These are set in the water with pieces of split wood for floats and stones for weights.

Their lines are made of the same *ok ham* as their nets; their hooks are made of wood, bones and sometimes of bird's claws:

## Climate.

In winter the climate is extremely severe; the cold is some years so great that the ice of the Grand River has been known to be five feet and a half thick. The river frequently congeals about the 25th or 28th of November and is not navigable until the end of May or the commencement of June. Some years it clears earlier, but it is very seldom. Last year, it was not fordable before the 24th June; however such severity is seldom experienced. Frost generally sets in about the 15th of September and sometimes it freezes during the nights of the whole summer season.

The climate in the upper part of River *au Liard* is much milder than at this place; Spring is at least a fortnight or three weeks earlier and Fall much later. The river is taken in fall by the first frost.

(1) A species of salmon, probably the "Wananish," so plentiful in Lake St. John, P. Q.: some say it is found in the MacKenzie River only.

In summer, the nights are clear, short and cool, and the days are on the contrary long and the heat insupportable. The nights are so clear during the summer that, like Norwegians, we can see to read and write without the help of a candle. It is quite the reverse in winter, we are then involved in almost perpetual darkness.

The air is, I believe, healthy, as no endemial diseases prevail <sup>Health.</sup> among the Natives; the disorders most frequent among them are colds, consumption and fevers, supposed to be occasioned by their obstinacy in the pursuit of animals in the spring season, and eating putrified meat, such as beasts that are found dead in their squares and which had perhaps been there a month or so. They eat with as good appetite as if it was the most delicious food, any animal they find that died either of wounds or sickness and which is already almost wasted by maggots: they even pretend that such meat has a much sweeter flavour.

The inhabitants of the country which I have endeavoured to <sup>Natives.</sup> describe are the Beaver Indians, but their original name is *Echel-la-o-tuna* or *Gens des Bois Forts*, and pretend to be a branch of the tribe of the Beaver Indians of Peace River, from whom they had been formerly separated and then driven this way by their inveterate enemies the Crees who, previous to the introduction of European arms into this quarter, were continually waging war against them. These wars exterminated great numbers of them, so that they were at length reduced from a numerous tribe to but about 200 men.

Their language still bears an analogy to that of the Peace <sup>Language.</sup> River Indians, who are at most not above seven or eight days walk in an easterly direction from the place where those of the Grand River reside.

Though there is some affinity between the languages of these two tribes, yet they differ considerably in their manners and

customs, for these Indians are very effeminate and never wage war with other nations, while those of the Peace River are a war-like tribe and always at war with their neighbours and often with their nearest relations. The Indians of this Fort and those of River *au Liard* form but one nation tho' they wish to make it appear otherwise. As to the number of women and children, it is impossible for me who have never seen a fourth of them, to say; but to give a moderate guess they are computed to about three hundred.

Scarcity of women.

The fair sex in the tribe which resides in the upper part of the Forks are few in number, the cause of which may be ascribed to the custom they have of often destroying the female children when just born. The only reason they give for this barbarous custom, is that it is a great deal of trouble to bring up girls, and that women are only an encumbrance, useless in time of war and exceedingly voracious in time of want. This cruel habit is however wearing away. Yet this scarcity of women does not induce them to prostitute their wives among themselves or to strangers like other savage tribes inhabiting the North. One woman is common to two brothers and often to three; mothers will cohabit with their sons, brothers with their sisters, but a father will seldom cohabit with his daughter.

Appearance and dress of the men.

The men are commonly of the middle size, have well proportioned limbs, regular features and are fairer in complexion than any other Indian nation I have seen. They wear their hair long behind, and short before, like the Canadians; those who desire to appear greater bucks than the rest, tie their hair, wear ornaments, such as feathers, beads in their ears, and paint or tattoo their faces ridiculously ugly. Around their head, they wear a piece of beaver, otter or marten skin decorated with a bunch of feathers before and behind. The rest of their dress consists of a beaver robe, a *capot*, a *brayel*, and leggings of dressed moose deer skin. Their robes and *capots* are ornamented with

several bunches of leather strings garnished with porcupine quills of different colours, the ends of which are hung with beaver claws. About their neck they have a well polished piece of caribou horn, which is white and bent around the neck; on their arms and wrists they tie bracelets and arm bands made also of porcupine quills; around their waist they have also a porcupine quill belt curiously wrought and variegated with quills of different colours.

The women are in general of a lower stature than the men, <sup>The wo-</sup> wear their hair and ornaments like them, and are reckoned <sup>men.</sup> handsome. Their dress in winter is a *cotillon*, woven like a mat, of thongs of hare skin and a robe of the same *drug*; on their heads they have a cap shaped like a milled cap (?) made of the same stuff. Their leggings are long and made like trowsers except in the front where an aperture is left to attend the calls of nature. Their summer dress consists of a leather *cotillon*, leather robe, leggings, &c., as in winter.

Their husbands are very kind to them, their only business being to make the men's clothes and their own, while the men's work is to chop wood, strike fire, make the campment, hunt, &c., &c. These Indians have a strange custom, which, if it is not the most barbarous, is at least the most unnatural and disgusting of any I ever heard of. Whenever the women bring forth a male child, they have a rule of pulling its legs every night and morning, and squeeze its thighs, hoping by a superstitious notion to procure him a pair of long shanks necessary for a hunter, as being greatly conducive to his becoming a great runner. This custom is kept up until the boy is two years old, when it is dropped and he is allowed to grow according to nature (1).....

Besides this custom they have that also of biting, beating, <sup>Mourning.</sup> knocking themselves with axes; tearing their clothes, cutting

(1) The rest, unfit for publication.



their hair at the loss of any of their relations; some carry their crazy capers to such a pitch of frenzy as to kill themselves with the blows they so inflict.

They leave their dead on the spot where they die, without removing them; they strew over them a few leaves in summer or snow in winter, with a little earth; over this they make a kind of small hut of large wood, well secured from wild animals, and they lay in the grave all the deceased things, i.e. instruments, arms, clothes, &c.

Religion.

I have heard of no mysteries or religious rites existing among them; they have a confused idea of the deluge, but the absurd stories, and improbable adventures with which it is filled renders it so useless that I shall leave this to people fond of romance. They also allow the existence of a Supreme Being whose invisible jurisprudence over them they positively deny, being ignorant of any other rulers of the earth than the Natives who inhabit it. The opinion they have of a future state of existence is comprised in these few words, that when any of them die, they resume life again under the form of a young child.

They have romantic and fabulous tales but which have neither moral tendency nor moral interpretation, therefore I shall not trouble you with an account of them. (1)

Amuse-  
ments.

Their only amusements are gallantry, dancing and singing. When a dance is open they form themselves into a circle when all the men join in one voice and dance until they are broken down with fatigue. They move regularly and keep good time with their songs which are far from being disagreeable to the ear, any more than their manner of dancing to the sight. Sometimes two young bucks will sally forth and dance a jig, which consists of various contorsions perfectly ludicrous but not easily described. Before the ball is open they untie or loosen their

(1) See Mr. George Keith's letter of 1st December, 1808 to Mr. Roderic McKenzie, "Tales of the Beaver Indians."

hair and grease it so much that it appears stiff, then they strew swan's down upon their heads and rub a little vermilion on their hands and faces; thus modelled they believe themselves agreeable to the women and handsome to spectators.

Their economy consists in hoarding up as much provisions as Economy. possible for the winter and in obtaining a great quantity of *original* snares. He who is the best hunter and who has the greatest number of snares is the greatest and richest man. When an Indian kills an animal, it is not his own, for he receives the smallest share, it is separated among the others who send a piece of their share, when cooked, to the hunter.

Their dispositions are sociable, mild and harmless; they never Character. make war with their neighbours and never quarrel with the Whites; they are submissive and very obedient, perhaps through ignorance. By what I can learn by hearsay and my own observation, they are naturally timorous, great liars, lazy and extremely curious; yet generally good natured, courteous to strangers, peaceable among themselves and easily contented.

As to forms of government, police and regulations, they have Government. none. When war is declared upon them, they elect a chief from among the old men; to him they submit for advice and commandment; so soon as peace is obtained, this chief is no more obeyed or attended to any further than to support him and his family when old, and ask his opinions in time of trouble. These chiefs hardly merit the title they enjoy. *Nan-au-Bellau* or Great Chief is the only one who is a little respected and obeyed; he is a middling size corpulent fellow, not without a competent share of common sense, at least enough to procure skins and provisions without hunting for them.

These Indians subsist upon every species of animals, birds and Food. fish, making no exception from the elk down to the mouse; from the swan to the smallest bird, the crow even is not excepted, and all fish is deemed equally palatable. They have also the dirty

custom of eating putrified and filthy flesh, such as animals that die of diseases or wounds, whether rotten, full of maggots or otherwise. And yet these savages are healthy, and few of them die of sickness; some live to such an advanced age as to see the third and fourth generation of their children.

Filial devotion.

When old age deprives them of the use of their limbs, their sons or nearest relations have enough respect for their grey hair, not to leave them in a campment or put them in any perilous position where their lives are endangered; on the contrary, the greatest care is taken of them and they are always carried by their sons or relations. I saw a man who was so old that he could no more swallow meat, but was fed upon no other kind of provisions but hare brains, and the marrow and brains of moose deer. He died only four years ago.

The manner in which they cook their victuals is by putting the meat in large bark dishes in which they throw a succession of red hot stones until the meat is boiled. Others boil their meat by hanging these bark dishes over a slow fire, high enough however to keep the fire from consuming the dishes.

In summer, they split their meat very thin and put it upon scaffold to dry by the heat of the sun; when perfectly dry, they pound it between two stones; thus prepared, it can keep for several years and is tolerably good when mixed up with grease; this is our staple article of provisions *when travelling*, it is called, *taureau* or *Pimecan*.

Habitations.

The habitations of these people are built in oblong figure, of pieces of wood placed upon one another, the roof of which is thatched with *sapin* and the sides cemented or rather calked with moss; an aperture is left at each end to take in large trees for fuel, and another at the top to let out the smoke.

Tools and weapons.

The instruments and the weapons in use among them, before they had been provided with better by the North-West Company, were axes, dagues, spears, bows and arrows. Their axes were

of stone shaped in the form of a pickaxe, the middle of which was scolloped in order to fit it to the end of a stick which, when well fastened, answered the purpose of a handle; thus arranged, they could hew or rather hack down the largest tree. A pole of about nine feet long with a bone blade at one end, furnished with a row of barbs, composed their spears; these bones are arranged and polished with beaver teeth, of which they also make use in making their bows and arrows. Their bows are made of dried willow at the end of which is fixed a small pointed bone furnished also with a barb on each side, as also at the extremity of their arrows which are about two feet long; some have flint stone points to their arrows, which inflict a mortal wound, being something similar to chewed ball. With these they are dexterous, being able to shoot an elk almost as far as with a gun.

Their snow-shoes, the length of which is from five to eight feet, are made of pine, turned up in the front, and then brought round in the form of a demi circle; the head is narrow, but it gradually opens towards the middle to the breadth of about a foot to fourteen inches, and from thence it is brought to a point behind. With these they can nimbly walk over the most complicated *embarras* or through the thickest wood. Snow-shoes.

The canoes of this nation are made of birch bark from twelve to eighteen feet long, and about two feet broad in the middle; the bottom is flat, and the two ends, gradually tapering into a point, rise about one foot and a half obliquely out of the water. They go well and weigh little, being encumbered with little wood i.e. *varangues* and *lisses*. Canoes.

Their manner of making war is that of every Indian tribe. They go in quest of their enemies in the summer and when they discover a family or so in fatal security, they approach them at or near day break when slumber is sound and then kill as many as possible. They never scalp, but strip the dead of their They dislike war.

dresses with which they show off upon their return to their own families.

They tell me that they never began a war with any of their neighbours; when hunting, they would sometimes fall in with another hunting party of their enemies. Whether in day time or at night, they all lent a hand to fell a great many trees the branches of which they sharpened in order to answer the purpose of *chevaux de frise*; behind this entrenchment they defended themselves until peace was called for by either party, which is made known by the display of a piece of meat fastened to the end of a long stick, which the conquered party would offer to the conqueror. If this did not prove effectual, an arrow was sent by a resolute fellow; this last always prevailed; if not, the ambassador was never hurt, but quietly sent back.

Their war dress consists of a cap decorated with feathers before and behind, sometimes bear claws sewed to a piece of leather served the purpose of a cap. From their neck down to their thighs, they wear a mat made of willow switches; it covers the whole front and guards against arrows, as it is close matted for that purpose. Besides this, they carry a shield on their left arm; this is a board ten inches broad, half an inch thick and one and a half feet long; the whole forming their war dress.

General  
character.

The general character of that part of the tribe inhabiting the Forks may be stated in these few words. Mild of temper, hospitable and compassionate to strangers, industrious, obedient and sociable Indians. Take away that unnatural custom of destroying their female infants, and the disgusting practise..... they may be considered the best natured and most peaceable set of people perhaps in all America. Those of this place, tho' not a separate tribe but only a distinct body, are quite the reverse; they are envious, crafty, indolent and gluttonous, yet they retain the good quality of a courteous generosity and of being a free-

hearted people to strangers, and never commence disputes with either Whites or among themselves. Thus, overlooking the bad qualities which are not cruel and barbarous in themselves, since they are committed thro' ignorance, they will deserve being called on the whole "a good people."

The productions of the country are the furs of the different species of animals which are the beaver, otter, lynx, wolverine, marten, mink and bears, the amounts of which, made into packs of eighty pounds weight, on an average, is sixty-five packs yearly, fully one third which are lynx skins; but the most important is the beaver and bear. The value of the whole has now and then been intimated to me, but as the sale frequently depends upon secret circumstances which are not always imparted to the clerks of the Company, I shall say nothing more on that head.

The lower parts produce very poor returns, their trade consisting in almost nothing but a display of forty or fifty packs made up of muskrats, the profits of which add very little to the purses of the parties concerned in the trade.

The wages allowed to a clerk at the expiration of a long term of seven years, which he has served as an apprentice for the sum of one hundred pounds for the whole term, was formerly the reasonable salary of one hundred pounds per annum, but since the late contention between the North-West Company and the X. Y. Company (1) and their junction, we are reduced to the sum of sixty pounds for the first year, eighty for the second, and one hundred for the third. For further wages we must depend on success in trade and friends in power. Some enjoy an income of two hundred a year; such prices were only given because the times were pressing. However, we are flattered and feed our-

(1) The Company formed by Sir Alexander McKenzie and others in 1801 and which joined with the "Old Concern" at Mr. McTavish's death, 1804.

selves upon the hope of once being admitted to a share in the Company, which, only friends and merit can procure us.

The prices of common men or Canadians are, by an established rule, never to exceed fifty or sixty pounds, being the highest, the lowest is twenty-five pounds, but few have these low prices.

History of  
the trade.

I shall confine my statement of the beginning of commerce to the Indians of the Grand River, as I do not suppose any thing further is required from me. A Fort was established at Slave Lake, in the year 1786, for the Chipewean Nation by the North-West Company, under the care of *Monsieur Le Roux*, who was a clerk to the said Company. This gentleman, not being of a very enterprising disposition, gave himself little trouble in enquiring of the Chipewears whether the countries beyond Slave Lake were inhabited by Indian tribes or not, but remained quiet waiting for the furs of the before mentioned nation. These being somewhat lazy to hunt, went in quest of strange nations with whom they would trade an old knife or a worn out axe, which they had got for little or nothing, for double or triple its value, till, at length, Mr. Leroux sent the English Chief, the principal man of the Chipewean tribe, to do his best in order to induce them to trade at the fort.

This expedition was crowned with success, and this good fortune was soon followed by another of more consequence. One James Sutherland, a common man in the Company's service, went in quest of them and brought a great number with him in the spring of the same year, from whom a considerable number of peltries was traded. In the course of this visit, a few presents were made to the Great Men which produced the desired effect, as these people gave such a high character of the white men's generosity and good disposition, that all the neighbouring nations who heard of it, vied, the next year, with each other who should trade the most with the Fort.

With these furs they travelled in winter upwards of a month, carrying them on their backs or dragging them on sledges, and leaving their families nearly two hundred miles behind. This was far from suiting their purpose, as they often starved in such tedious journeys, and only two-thirds of them would go to the Fort, the other third remaining to take care of the families during the others' absence. At length, the Company was persuaded by interested motives to establish a fort at Marten Lake the third year after the opening of trade with these tribes. This new post was fifteen days' march nearer to their lands, the trade was consequently carried on with greater success and ease.

This again was still found too inconvenient, as being too far distant from their families, so that, in 1796, Mr. Duncan Livingston, by the Companies' order, built a Fort in the Grand River about eighty miles from its source. Under his management these people were modelled anew and brought under an implicit obedience to the Whites' authority. He enjoyed his success, which was great, for the space of three years, when he was killed with three Canadians and his interpreter while on a voyage of discovery to the sea by the way of Grand River, about eight days' march downward from this place, by a fierce nation called the Esquimaux who inhabit the borders of the Ocean.

After his death, which happened in 1799, Mr. John Thomson was promoted to his place, and divided this nation the following year into two distinct bodies; but instead of an increase of trade as expected, a drawback of six packs was experienced the first year, sixteen the next, and so continually until last year, and we begin again to recover a few more packs. This, however, was not occasioned by the inactivity of those who had charge of the department, but rather by the late struggle between the X. Y. and the North-West Companies and, partly, by the death of many Natives.



Competition.

From competition arises a variety of circumstances which, for a moment, promote the interest of many, in augmenting wages and unfurling capacities which, without this, would perhaps never have been demonstrated, tho' it is often prejudicial to morals and equally injurious to the character of many.

Besides this, several people who are roguish in private and dissemblers in public (like at court) are the most noticed. Their persons are publicly attended to, and their interests are promoted to the greatest and most advantageous expectations. Shares in the Company are given to them altho' they never perhaps deserved it. While these are thus advanced to what their merits otherwise would not have entitled them, others, honest characters, let their abilities be ever so great, are disregarded for the time being, and must think themselves happy in having the good fortune to gather the rags and be allowed the approaches of these *dissembling courtiers*.

Another bad effect of competition is drunkenness, murder, theft, besides many other vices.

With respect to the Indians, the care and attention that is paid (I was going to say to their persons) to them for the sake of their skins, renders them much more civilized and cunning. By this, they take a footing which, with time, induces them to commit actions which otherwise they would not have dared to mention. Indolence, robbery and murder are the consequences of an opposition in trade: people would suppose it would rouse their attention to industry, having goods at a lower price, but far to the contrary; drunkenness, idleness and vice are preferred; they are, indeed, of a beggarly disposition. Thus no good can be derived from the turbulent struggles of opposition in this country; it destroys trade, creates vice, and renders people crafty, ruins good morals, and almost totally abolishes every humane sentiment in both Christian and Indian breast.

## VOCABULARY

Ya-ten-naw dy.....	God.
Taie .....	Father.
An-na.....	Mother.
Se-chu-ai .....	My son.
Set-toa .....	My daughter.
Gun-naw-ai.....	Brother.
Sor-ra .....	Sister.
Din-nai .....	Husband.
Tse-Kegh .....	Wife.
Boy	} the same as man and woman.
Girl	
Taizo-na.....	Child.
Din-hy-yeetha .....	Man.
Tsai.....	Woman.
El-thee.....	Head.
In-nai.....	Face.
Eghon .....	Nose.
En-nau-ghai .....	Eyes.
In nih .....	Nostrils.
En-naw-the-la-thun .....	Eye brows.
Ette-zau-dai .....	Ear.
Elte-zid-dai.....	Forehead
Thee-ghaw .....	Hair.
In-nec-go-thin .....	Cheeks.
Eth-aw .....	Mouth.
Ekaw-sai .....	Throat.
Ed-dau .....	Lips.
Eghu-ai.....	Teeth.
Eth-aw-dai .....	Tongue.
Be-daw-ko-net-then .....	Beard.
Eck-ko.....	Neck.

Egho-chin-na .....	Shoulder.
Etsa-thunna .....	Elbow.
Egho-nai .....	Arm.
Ellaw.....	Hand.
Ellaw-thun-na .....	Fingers.
Ellaw-ghon-nai .....	Nails.
To-yea.....	Breast.
Em-bedd .....	Belly.
Et-twa-zais .....	Back.
Eck-keh .....	Feet.
E-gote .....	Knee.
Ez-zee-ai .....	Heart.
Et-zu-et-Thun-nai .....	Stomach.
Ed-del-la .....	Blood.
To-yea .....	Milk.
Eth-thith .....	Skin.
Et-thin.....	Meat.
Et-thun-nai.....	Bones.
E-dee thaw.....	Hearing.
Yea-hee .....	Seeing.
Thlah-thlee.....	Tasting.
Thlet-tsin .....	Smelling.
Bet-zaw-dad-zid .....	Touching.
Dzef-zee.....	Scream, voice.
Ghōf-sai.....	Talking.
Yaw-son-dethaw .....	Noise.
Au-zel .....	Crying.
Naw-el-tlo .....	Laughter.
Yeh-eece .....	Sneezing.
Ed-ai-dzid .....	Scratching.
Tau-dell-oon.....	Trembling.
Eh-ghin.....	Singing.
Nin-ai-hee.....	Sighing.

Ouda-cheece.....	Whistling.
Tset-hee.....	Lying down.
Naut-zai-thid.....	Standing.
Tset-daw .....	Sitting.
Tsai-kou-yais-awn-tset-del-hé.....	A widow.
Beh-ghen-naw .....	Life or living.
Den-na-zee .....	Man's body.
Be-gon-aw-tlau .....	Go for it.
Noote-hey .....	To sleep.
Nawte-set-hey.....	Dreaming.
Yawt-zet-lee .....	Jumping.
Ket-hai-zet-ee-nai .....	Running.
Oote-hoon .....	Holding.
Ghon-ed-daw-degh-yea .....	Love.
Be-cou-ded-tlaw.....	Hate.
In-nee-ney-ouh.....	Glad.
Sho-ghaw-ou-cjaw .....	Joy.
Aw-nee-dai-thi .....	Sorrow.
El-ly-ghai .....	Pain.
Taw-oo-yea.....	Name.
Bau-ghan-naw-thet-he .....	Trouble.
Ko-thlai.....	Work.
Ko-dzu-det-dee-a.....	Lazy.
Cin-ny .....	I.
Nin-ny.....	Thou.
Ou-win ny .....	Ye, he.
Naw-han-ny.....	We.
Oti-aw-not-zed-dai.....	They.
Shey-ot-he.....	To eat.
Et-tsu-tsai .....	To drink.
Ko-tse-ighn-Kauth .....	To carry.
Aw-dee-Shool.....	Throw.
Nawn-et-tath-ee.....	To cut.

Nau-din-nai-shu .....	To hide.
Bee-dint-zai .....	To beat.
Tsai-kou-yea-haw-ee-key .....	Birth of a child.
Ighnt-thlelth .....	Race.
Ko-kau-neet-thlau .....	Marriage.
Neel-tsi .....	Wind.
Neel-tsi-nawt-thed .....	Storm.
Ko-dait-hogh .....	Rain.
Unknown .....	Soul.
Thlo-nee-thed .....	Death.
No word for .....	Age.
Kau-ney-ob-tsin .....	Youth.
Net-chaw .....	Big.
Tsu-daw .....	Small.
Taw-dee-nai-thee .....	High.
Naw-dee-in-doh-ai .....	Low.
Kout-lee .....	Cold.
Ko-koon .....	Warm.
Ko-nee-treel-ai .....	Stupid.
Kogh-ye-ohn .....	Wise.
Nawt-zid .....	Strong.
Nawt-gel-hubai .....	Weak.
Dai-zul-ai .....	Thin.
Dait-hoghn .....	Thick.
Net-hai .....	Broad.
Egh-ghawl-ai .....	Narrow.
Deh-kaw-lee .....	White.
Den-ai-tes-sy .....	Black.
Deh-cöz .....	Red.
Deh-d-tho .....	Yellow.
Dihm-ai-tjiz-ee .....	Blue.
Saw .....	for Sun and Moon.
Thigh .....	Stars.

Yeaw.....	Sky.
Kot-cill-ai .....	Fog.
Kghi .....	Clouds.
Saw-tlou-lai .....	Rays.
Mangh-caw.....	Shore.
Sheet .....	Mountain.
Thai .....	Rock or stone.
In-taung .....	Weeds or leaves.
Dai-chin .....	Trees and wood.
Dai-highng .....	Thaw.
Eet-dee-ai .....	Thunder.
Bed-da-koon-nai .....	Lightning.
Yawth .....	Snow.
Teghn .....	Ice.
Koughn.....	Fire.
Yea-Kongh .....	Day light.
Ink-koz-zai } .....	Shadow.
Ko-yee }	
Ko-dihn-cet-tlai .....	Dark.
Dzin-ai.....	Day.
Eht-tleb-gai .....	Night.
Saw-kaw-on-hawl.....	East.
Saw-naw-ec-cghn .....	West.
Unknown .....	North and South.
Eem-begh .....	Summer.
Yawth-kegh.....	Winter.
Hau-co-tau-zai .....	Autumn.
Ko-loo-zai.....	Spring.
None, count by winters and sum- mers.....	Years.
No expression known.....	Time.
Naigh .....	Earth.
Tghew.....	Water.

Tghew-net-chaw.....	Lake or sea.
Taw-kau.....	River.
No-eb.....	Island.
Eth-aw-ee-keh.....	Sand.
Ko-tlegh.....	Clay.
Thlai-ee-quew.....	Dust.
Ca-dai-kee.....	Hill.
Thogh.....	Brayet.
Shee.....	Food.
Tsa-dad-ai-yaw.....	Dressed.
Ai-nai-igh.....	Thief.
Keegh.....	Bark.
Dai-chin-thow.....	Branch.
Del-lau-kau.....	Flower.
Ko-laugh.....	Beast.
Thlou-ai.....	Fish.
In-naw-ee.....	Worms
Tsawl-ai.....	Frog.
Dzuse.....	Fly.
El-len-tee-ai.....	Ant.
Kaul-ai.....	Spider.
Thling.....	Dog.
Tlu-ai.....	Mouse.
Ko-kau.....	Goose.
Chith.....	Duck.
Eh-chu-ai.....	Feathers
Eh-gez-zai.....	Eggs.
Eh-to-ai.....	Nest.
Myn.....	Hut.
Kou-la-kau.....	Door
Kaughn-keh.....	Hearth.
Dai-chin-tai.....	Floor.
Thihn.....	Hatchet

Begh .....	Knife.
El-lau.....	Boat or canoe.
Yea-ou-thlai.....	Building.
Tsid-dai.....	Blanket.
No other name known for .....	Clothes.
Ee-ai .....	Capot.
Thoi.....	Leggins.
Kau-nai.....	Now.
Ko-thait-tsin.....	Before.
Nau-dai-zy .....	After.
Dai-ye-engh .....	Here.
Ai-yid .....	There.
E-hel-lé .....	Yesterday.
Tsa-ghon.....	War.
E-haw-yawt-zet-hee .....	Quarrel.
Su-kez .....	Fighting.
Ko-kole .....	Spear.
Ken-nen-ee .....	Guard.
Beb-deet-tlihn .....	Distress.
Nau-kaw-nai .....	Enemy.
E-dai-ye.....	Friend.
Ee-ai-deet-ee .....	Slave.
Bai-kaw-ho-thid-du.....	Chief.
A-deet-tlis .....	Writing.
En-thling-ee .....	One.
Aunk-ee .....	Two.
Zaw-ghai.....	Three.
Ting-yee .....	Four.
El-lau-ke-thee.....	Five.
Et-ci-tau-gee .....	Six.
Et-ci-ting-gee .....	Seven.
Tlaw-ci-ting-gee.....	Eight.
Kallaw-ko-nen-no.....	Nine.



Ko-nen-ni.....	Ten.
Aunk-ee-ko-nen-no.....	Twenty.
Taw-ghee-ko-nen-no.....	Thirty.
Ting-ghee-ko-nen-no.....	Forty.
Ninni-they.....	You begin.
Eh-kou-daw.....	Ended.
Tlegh-hé.....	Yes.
Heel-ai.....	No.
Tow-an-nee.....	How.
Et-law-ho.....	When.
Tin-nai-tee.....	Where.
Yea-dil-tee.....	What.
Mea-dee.....	Who.
Did di-zin-na.....	To-day.
Sa-chongh-ai.....	To-morrow.
Nehl-he.....	Look.
Nin-ni-net-ci.....	Yours.
Et-lau-ee-taw.....	With what.
Ko-yau-gai.....	Under.
Ko-dau-gai.....	Upon.

This, dear sir, is an authentic account of this country and its inhabitants with a few hints on some Indians who are not under its immediate dependency, upon which I might have enlarged had not the scarcity of paper obliged me to put an end to my letter.

If I attempted this imperfect description it was not with a view of gaining praise to myself or giving information to you, sir, but as I have already observed, to show with what readiness I should always attend your wishes. But were I to declare in favor of this undertaking of which you are pleased to desire my opinion (1), I would abuse your confidence and commit an

(1) Mr. Roderick McKenzie had the intention of publishing a History of the North-West Company; see: "Reminiscences."

act of violence against my own sentiments. I conceive that many disadvantages must naturally arise to the detriment of trade and injurious to the true welfare of the Company from its publication. Contentions will revive, and commerce already hurt, will then be ruined; swarms of adventurers will, I fear, inundate the North. Those whose rewards are still buried under the mole of a beaver lodge, or wandering over the remote deserts of the country, will then but too severely feel its effects.

The restlessness of people's ambitious notions of the treasures of the North-West will again revive, and enterprising geniuses are too frequently exhibited in these times for us Norwegians to enjoy the sweets of peace for any length of time. Besides, this publication, when handled with a masterly pen, will at once furnish them with a guide, an interpreter and a preceptor, not to mention the immediate advantages which will accrue to them by the accuracy of the descriptions of places the most likely to obtain subsistence from, and most favorable to traders.

I could add many others of a like nature which must infallibly occur to any person concerned who reflects on the late contests between the North-West Company and the X. Y. Company under the consequences of which the interests of commerce and those of the companies still groan, and from which it will be some time before we recover.

However, as I am somewhat doubtful about my own judgment which I do not believe infallible, I submit these considerations to your better judgment and experience, hoping that my doubts and fears with respect to its consequences may be as groundless as my ardent desire to deserve your confidence and esteem is sincere. Being at the same time with deference and respect,

Dear Sir,

Your most devoted and humble servant,

FERD. WENTZEL.

## LETTER No. 4.

McKenzie River, April 30th, 1811.

Mr. McKenzie,

Dear Sir,

Depending entirely on your generosity for forgiveness in not writing so fully as might have been expected from a person buried as we are in this country, I beg leave to state briefly that I am gratefully sensible of your kindness towards me and hope for a continuance of your good will.

Starvation. This last winter has been the most melancholy and most disastrous that could ever have befallen to any one single man to support without becoming torpidly stupid or totally senseless. (1) Our distresses and sufferings have been so great, that, of four Christians who were left at this establishment last Fall, I am the only survivor, and in a state more easily conceived than described, when I inform you that, from the 13th of December 1810 to the 12th January, we knew, nor saw any kind of meat but dressed moose deer skins and green parchment skins. At this date we received only seven plues (2) of fresh meat and were upon this little supply no less than eight mouths, of course it was but two meals.

From that period to the 11th of March, we lived upon nothing else but dried beaver skins; our number was then increased to thirteen, and fifteen during the space of twenty-two days. We destroyed in order to keep ourselves alive upward of three

(1) See : Mr. Keith's letter, 5th January, 1812, from Great Bear Lake.

(2) The value of seven beaver skins.

hundred beaver skins besides a few lynx and otter skins. Since that time to the present day we have a meal now and then; at intervals we are still two or three days without anything. All my men are dead of starvation, viz: Louis LeMai dit Poudrier and one of his children, François Pilon and William Henry, my hunter.

I am unable to describe my own position; all my Indians have starved more or less; from one small band only, I received news yesterday evening that five were dead of hunger; but of the majority of the Natives, I have not heard of since the month of November, they were already at that period gnawing the clothing they had upon themselves.

Hares have totally failed throughout all parts of the country and large cattle (1) have been uncommonly scarce at this place in particular, and the cold has been, this winter, the severest I have ever yet known. The ice on the Grand River is no less than four and a half to five feet thick, and at this late date none of the snow has yet disappeared in the woods.

My own position is yet precarious tho' I support my feelings in reflecting that no blame can attach to me; these thoughts are my only comfort. I am quite alone at the Fort, not even an animal to keep me company. Such are the vicissitudes of fickle fortune! a place where I had never great cause to complain! But, to use an Indian phrase, *Cooloo*, (2) I am still alive, why should I complain.

Could I persuade myself that my little friend Johnny (3) would recollect me, I should request a few new tunes of him

Music in  
the North-  
West.

(1) Large game.

(2) *Cooloo*, "it is indifferent," "*qu'importe*."

(3) Mr. John McKenzie, son of the Hon. Roderic McKenzie, Lientenant in the Canadian Fencibles and for many years post-master at Terrebonne. One of his daughters still lives in Terrebonne; another is married to Mr. Mercil, teller in the *Banque du Peuple* at Montreal.

for which I would make any return in my power. I have some music to which he is welcome by only sending a note, for I have entirely given up the flute and only scrape, now and then, on the fiddle. I beg you will please remember me to him; were La better scholar I would offer myself to begin an acquaintance by letter with him, but I know my inability. I am an Indian, he is a Christian, he will not like such a rough correspondent...

.....

Remaining with the utmost respect,

Your most obedient tho' feeble servant,

WILL. FERD. WENTZEL.

## LETTER No. 5.

MacKenzie River, Department Great Bear Lake,

February 28th, 1814.

Mr. MacKenzie,

Dear Sir,

The affairs of the Concern in this Department are yet much on the same footing they were the preceding year; the appearances of returns last Fall throughout all Athabaska were, however, rather more promising, (particularly in this quarter where we expect a good increase), considering the melancholy destruction of the principal establishment last winter. We are at present convinced that the Indians trading there were the perpetrators of that disaster (1). Some proposals were made among the Gentlemen Proprietors to retaliate, but it proceeded no further.

Athabaska itself is in fact dwindling down to nothing. The Indians complain of the want of beaver; (the Iroquois having ruined the country) (2), and they formed a conspiracy last Spring to massacre all the Whites of Fort Chipewean and Big Island, in the Peace River, as well as Moose Deer Island Establishment at Slave Lake. The Chipewean tribe appears to have been the first instigators, and altho' the affair seems to have been laid

(1) The destruction of Fort Nelson; see Mr. Keith's letter of the 15th January, 1814.

(2) The North-Westers often took up Iroquois Indians with them as hunters, to provide the trading posts with game. These Indians having no interest in the country hunted recklessly and at all seasons, and were much disliked in the North-West.

aside and forgotten, still we are alive to the most painful apprehensions for the safety of our lives. In this quarter, about the same time, the Loucheux (1) were near creating an uproar at Fort Good Hope on account of a deficiency in beads at the Fort; yet it would appear the Concern did not consult their own interest with the care required. For two successive years, a pressing demand had been made for beads, it being well understood that the Loucheux tribe would scarcely trade anything else, and for the want of this, their favorite article, they preferred taking back to their tents the peltries they had brought to trade; this neglect must necessarily diminish the amount of returns. These Indians are moreover very clamorous and much addicted to war and are dreaded by all the surrounding tribes, except the Esquimaux: beads however will pacify them.

I have also been informed that the pamphlet respecting spirituous liquors in the North-West, &c., which seemed to be kept a secret in Montreal, had however been given for perusal to a Mr. Sutherland at Cumberland House (a clerk in the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company's service) the very first year it was sent in the North, and that he made several extracts therefrom. He obtained it from a distinguished partner in the Concern. I do not know how far this was consistent with prudence; there was however no necessity for doing it.

Likewise, all the old journals and account books, &c., of Athabaska, of which you had taken so much care while you managed the affairs of the Department, have all been taken to *Lac La Pluie* during the reign of Mr. Arch: Normand McLeod and left there, for what purpose it is not easy to tell, but when I was on my

Downfall  
of Atha-  
baska.

(1) The *Loucheux* or *Querelleux* Indians inhabited to the west of, and near the lower part of MacKenzie River. They were very shy and quick sighted, which made the *Voyageurs* say that they could see on both sides at once, and they called them *Loucheux*.

way to Canada two years ago, I saw them laying scattered here and there in the *garret* of the *Athabaska House* mingled with the old useless *agrès* of canoes, some upon the beams, others among the old sails, old kettles, sponges, &c., &c.: pages of different books and journals strewed all over the apartment. I acquainted Mr. McLeod and Mr. Kenneth McKenzie and was desired by the latter to mention the circumstance to you

The Athabaska library is also, I may say, not only neglected, but almost destroyed; scarcely a complete set of books can be found. By these different circumstances a person might be tempted to think with great truth that one thing kept pace with another in the decline of once famed Athabaska, formerly the delight and school of the North. The Canadians, who were ever fond of the place and thought seldom or ever of their native country, are now disgusted at the treatment they receive and gather their money as fast as the squaws gather berries, in order to get rid of the "*S..... pays maudit.*"

Respecting this place, I can as yet say but little, being a stranger and having yet no proper interpreter to get myself explained to the Natives. It would however appear, from what information I could pick up from the Indians inhabiting the borders of this extensive lake, that it is not quite so extensive as Lake Superior, as had been before supposed. There is no such a thing as a river discharging itself from it into the Frozen Ocean.

The Coppermine River is about four days' walk from the east end of the lake; and the Natives also affirm that the sea is much nearer to that end of the lake than it is from where Sir Alex. MacKenzie turned back on the Grand River, which they maintain is a large lake which communicates to the sea by a very broad outlet, and not a bay of the Ocean as generally believed by the Whites. They had their information from the *Loucheux*, and these from the Esquimaux who are the second tribe of



Indians from the sea, or the neighbouring nation to those bordering it. The Sea Tribe are called "Sharp Eyes," from what reason I could not learn, except from the fabulous tradition of the Esquimaux, who assert that they kill people with their eyes just by looking at them.

Hoping I have not presumed too far on your kind indulgence in the foregoing, I beg leave to conclude with my most humble respects to Mrs. MacKenzie and Mr. Harry McKenzie, and remain with gratitude most respectfully,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedt. servt.,

WILL. FERD. WENTZEL.

## LETTER No. 6.

McKenzie's River Department,

Bear Lake (1), March 6th, 1815.

Roderick McKenzie, Esq.,

Dear Sir,

.....  
.....

The late intelligence from Canada stating the glorious event which had succeeded to the troubles on the Continent of Europe, with the prospect of a speedy termination of hostilities in Canada, has once more enlivened the merry lads of the North, whose congratulations, exultations and, especially, *expectations* on that account baffle all description. Plans are formed, executed and fortunes made in less than three seconds; thus the torpor under which they have so long suffered, with the frown of despondency that wrinkled their brows so many years, has been all at once dissipated by the contents of one single "Herald."

Such is the changeable state of the mind of man! expiring one moment under the tortures of grief and dying the next of joy. But I, who am an *unit* of the unfortunate, can little participate in the fanciful hopes of ever becoming a sharer in the concerns of that Company to whose services I have already dedicated sixteen years of my youthful days. I therefore can

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(1) Now, Fort Franklin.

only be a silent observer, without enjoying the good fortune of those whose endeavours have been more successful.

When I was at Fort William two years ago, Mr. William McGillivray assured me that my name should not be forgotten on the list of promotion; but "out of sight is being out of mind." I dare not supplicate the interest of some powerful person in my behalf, being fearful of giving cause of offence as becoming troublesome, tho' I am convinced that some have been advanced whose claims were not superior to my own. No doubt they had the means to "turn the wheel" which I had not.....

The trade. Turning to the affairs of the once celebrated Athabasca department, whose trade has been so beneficial to the Concern and increased by your successful care and management, a person cannot help lamenting its present ruined state. The preceding year, the collective exertions of the whole department did not exceed 380 packs, including the returns of the year before from McKenzie's River.

I cannot account for it, but, by some fatality or other, the Natives have taken a dislike to the Whites, and the reductions of the returns may perhaps be as much attributed to this unfortunate circumstance as it may be to the pretended ruined state of the country. Still, the cry of "no beaver" is the only ground on which the Concern have come to the resolution of reducing very properly the number of posts in Peace River, and very injudiciously relinquishing without reserve the whole department of McKenzie's River, a place which might yet have been a profitable consideration to the Company had a proper plan of reform been tried; it only wanted that to make it beneficial.

The  
McKenzie  
Depart-  
ment  
abandoned.

It would however seem as if reforms had no connexion whatever with the economical system lately adopted in all things by the Concern respecting the trade, &c., of the North, so that Athabasca, which once commanded fifteen establishments, will ere

the present gets to hand possess no more than eight, viz : Slave Lake, Turtle Creek, Fort Chipewean, Fort Vermillion, Hay River, Dunvegan, St. John's, and *Pierre au Calumet* in Athabasca River ; being two posts in the Slave Lake, two of Fort Chipewean and four in the Peace River.

Notwithstanding these gloomy appearances *squires* are manufactured yearly with as much speed and confidence as Captains, Lieutenants and Ensigns were in His Excellency Sir George Prevost's time when I was, two yeas ago, in Montreal.

Craving your indulgence for the length of this, I beg leave to conclude with humble deference and respect.

Dear Sir,

Your most grateful and obedient servant,

WILD. FERD. WENTZEL.

## LETTER No. 7.

Fort Chipewean, May 28th, 1816.

Dear Sir,

I duly received your friendly favor dated 1815, for which I beg leave to offer my grateful thanks, and entreat your forgiveness that I should, (for want of time) have been less diffusive this year than I should have wished, or a grateful remembrance for your kindness and generosity towards me would very well justify. Mr. Stuart, who will have the pleasure of seeing you, will testify how much I feel afflicted on that account. Hoping however, from a conviction of having had recourse very seldom to such excuses, that you will overlook this, I respectfully request you will still honor me with a continuance of your correspondence.

Herewith, I have the satisfaction of forwarding one of Mr. Keith's journals (1) containing an account of the unfortunate affair which occurred in the destruction of Fort Nelson: it is correct and I have Mr. Keith's leave to forward it. Next year, I shall endeavour to send the journal which you were pleased to ask me while I was at Montreal. I obtained it too late to copy, otherwise it would have gone with this

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(1) Mr. Keith's journal could not be found, but see: his letter 15th January, 1814.

Respecting the late enterprise of the Hudson's Bay Company, in the person of Mr. John Clarke as their superintendent, against the Athabasca department, I request leave to refer you to my letter addressed to Mr. James McKenzie as well as to Mr. John Stuart personally.

Athabasca, tho' unfortunate these many years back, is yet <sup>The Hudson Bay Company in Athabaska.</sup> worthy of notice; and never, I believe, had the Concern better cause for exultation in the prosperity of their affairs than the success which has attended their measures this year against the formidable opposition by which they were assailed the preceding year. Unsuspicious of contention, without an outfit or a competent number of hands to defend it, Athabaska is attacked all on a sudden by upwards 100 men, 10 clerks and a superintendent bringing in 14 loaded canoes full of merchandise, &c., fit for the Indian trade, and, proud I am to say, as suddenly repels and crushes them for at least upwards a year, and, at the same time, increases its exports.

Four hundred packs have been shipped off for *Lac La Pluie*, while the Hudson's Bay party have not 5 packs in weight in furs throughout the whole department. No less than 15 men, 1 clerk with a woman and child died of starvation going up Peace River, and of four establishments they had formed in the fall, not one could weather out the winter; all were obliged to enter into terms with the North-West Company to save themselves from starving to death. The major part of their goods still remain in our stores, and are to continue there until the month of October and December ensuing.

Such has been the consequence of the infatuated presumption of Mr. Clarke, that, out of his once numerous crew which he brought in this department last Fall, only between fifty and sixty remain, the residue, besides those dead, having gone towards Lesser Slave Lake and *Fort des Prairies*, where they are

scattered in all directions. Only four out of the fourteen canoes he brought in are gone out.

Having nothing more worthy of notice to add, I beg leave to conclude with most respectful sentiments of regard to Mrs. McKenzie and my little friend, Master Alexander. (1)

Remaining with gratitude and respect,

Dear Sir,

Your grateful and most obedient servant,

WILD. FERD. WENTZEL.

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(1) Hon. Roderic McKenzie's eldest son.

## LETTER No. 8.

*Lac La Pluie*, August 4th, 1818.

Dear Sir,

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Since my arrival at this place, I have hardly had time to think about any thing, having constantly been employed in giving out equipments and advances to the Athabaska and Lesser Slave Lake men whose accounts I have closed to-day, so that I am writing this with the utmost haste, being ordered off to-morrow morning for Athabaska.

Respecting the local concerns of the country, it will be pleasing <sup>The trade.</sup> to you to hear that the Company's affairs appear to wear a much better appearance than could be expected in the present fermenting state of the country. In Athabasca, the returns have turned out better than last year, the produce of the present year amounting to 430 odd packs, making an increase of nearly fifty packs over the preceding year. The Hudson's Bay Company have not even a half pack to boast of altho' the celebrated Mons. De Quoine (1) was their acting agent in Athabasca. *Lac La Pluie* Department however lost thirty-two packs, the Hudson's Bay servant trading that number while Mr. Dean had but forty; this, with thirty pack collected at Green Lake by Mr. W. Henry's opponent, forms the amount of the chartered Concern's returns.

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(1) Mr. Decoigne, an old North-Wester who had been long in the Athabasca district and had joined the Hudson Bay Company under Lord Selkirk and Mr. Robertson's auspices.



In Red River, the settlers seem to be taking a deeper root than ever; their crops of wheat appeared fine, tho' it was only the 12th June when I got there. Since that date, three priests have passed here bound for that quarter, besides Mr. Colin Robertson, Peter Andries (?), &c., with a number of clerks and fourteen canoes. We are informed here that the former and latter are bound for the Athabasca so that there is every likelihood of a strong struggle this ensuing season; but every one here seems to behold this formidable appearance with cool contempt and little care and no apprehensions respecting the probable result.

Mr. John McGillivray retires this year and Mr. John George McTavish goes into Athabasca, where he is to assume the lead in place of Mr. John McKenzie. The outfit is however rather scanty for want of hands to take in the goods necessary for the trade. This has been occasioned by a bungling error of Mr. Rocheblave, (1) the acting agent at Fort William, in consequence of which many sour faces are made, and indeed with just cause, at a moment when the opposition seem to be getting down hearted, a moment which should be seized without loss of time in order to complete what the Company's enemies wished to do themselves. However, every one looks bold and seems not to

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(1) The Honorable Pierre de Rocheblave entered early in the North-West fur trade in which he made a considerable fortune. In 1801, he was a partner in the new concern formed under the auspices of Sir Alexander MacKenzie, then commonly called the X. Y. Company, and superintended its interests in the Athabaska region. He became one of the most influential members of the North-West Company after the coalition of 1804 and was, in 1818, at Fort William, where he had been sent the year before to procure the arrest of Lord Selkirk for his illegal seizure of the Company's property and his forcible entrance into their fort.

After leaving the North-West, Mr. de Rocheblave devoted much of his time to public affairs. He was elected to the Legislative Assembly for the City of Montreal, and afterwards appointed to the Legislative and Executive Councils of Lower Canada. He also held the position of Commissioner for the civil erection of parishes.

Mr. de Rocheblave married Miss Elmire Bouthiller and left two daughters: one still living in Montreal; the other, married to a British officer, Captain Willoughby.

dread any advantage to their opponents, which I heartily wish  
may turn out so.....  
.....

Being with the highest sentiments of esteem and gratitude,

Dear Sir,

Your most grateful servant,

WILD. FERD. WENTZEL.

The Honorable Roderic McKenzie,

Terrebonne,

Lower Canada.

## LETTER No. 9.

Athabasca Department,  
Great Slave Lake, April 5, 1819.

Dear Sir,

A person unacquainted with the wilds of this country would take little pleasure in perusing at any time the dry details of its concerns, but to you, Sir, who have ever been its patron and shared in an eminent degree the toils and dangers attendant on a long and successful residence in Athabasca, a relation of the occurrences now transpiring in this momentous period cannot be unacceptable. I therefore should deem it the height of impudence in me to make an apology for offering the following statement of events of which I was an eye witness.

Struggles  
with the  
Hudson  
Bay Com-  
pany.

Towards the latter end of September, last Fall, Messrs. Colin Robertson, John Clarke, MacAulay, Halcro, attended by a certain number of other clerks, interpreters, &c., with nineteen canoes, containing each five men and fifteen pieces, made their appearance at Fort Chipewean and took up their former quarters in one of the islands in the name of the Hudson's Bay Company. A great mob of the Chipewean being at that time in the vicinity, some families ranged themselves under the banners of these new comers. However, the defection was not very serious. Our people were late in coming in from *Lac La Pluie*; they did not arrive until the beginning of October; Mr. Clarke had already been off for Peace River with ten canoes well appointed.

The settlement and distribution of the outfits necessarily took up much time, and, the season being considerably advanced, our people were stopped by the ice; those of the Peace River, below the falls, and the MacKenzie River brigade, at Moose Deer Island, Slave Lake. Before I left Fort Chipewean, on the 11th of October, Mr. Colin Robertson was brought to the fort, a prisoner, by Messrs. Samuel Black and Simon McGillivray. Several of our men informed that he had threatened to excite the Natives to massacre the North-West Company's servants at Fort Chipewean, and our men refused to do their duty unless he was apprehended and detained in safe custody. This occasioned his arrest and he has been kept confined ever since, but treated with every attention he could expect in such a situation.

In the month of December, we had, tho' not directly, news from the Peace River importing that Mr. John Clarke, in his progress up that way, had partially seized Mr. William McIntosh, and had attempted to break open the North-West Company's stores at Fort Vermillon for a supply of provisions, but had been repulsed by the steady and resolute behaviour of Malataire, one of the interpreters of the Concern. Since that, we have had no other intelligence from that quarter.

With respect to this quarter, we have been opposed all winter by Mr. MacAulay and nineteen men besides a Canadian clerk, but they have continued in *statu quo*, not having even conversed with an Indian, but subsisted by the produce of their nets, not, however, without suffering incredible privations. Thus it may be said that that opposition (at least so far as our information goes) have as yet no solid footing in Athabasca.

McKenzie's River Department having been again assumed by the Concern the preceding year, it produced ninety packs of valuable peltries, and, if the outfit of the present year had not been stopped in the ice, a considerable increase would have

been the consequence. With regard to the general appearance of the returns of Athabasca this year, nothing certain can be said, tho' it is presumed that no considerable diminution will take place on account of the McKenzie's river returns.

## Salaries.

The prices of the men's wages have increased considerably; a middle man gets now a thousand livres, Halifax currency, and a *Bout*, fourteen hundred; interpreters, from sixteen to two thousand; clerks, from one hundred and fifty to two hundred pounds same currency. Some of the Hudson's Bay Company's clerks have three hundred pounds sterling, others less, and I believe few have more except those who are styled "Governors," these have five hundred .....

I beg leave to conclude with deference and respect,

Dear Sir;

Your ever grateful servant,

WILD. FERD. WENTZEL.

## LETTER No. 10.

Great Slave Lake,

Mountain Island, May 23th, 1820.

Dear Sir,

I have the honor of acknowledging with much respect the receipt of your very obliging favor of the 1st June, for which I beg to offer my grateful thanks. I had the pleasure of writing to you last year, but the Athabasca light canoe having been robbed at Grand Rapid by a set of desperadoes in the pay of the Hudson's Bay Company, my letters to Canada were seized with the budget of papers going out and, I suppose, are now lying on the table of some magistrate or sheriff's office. This, no doubt, is also the fate of a letter I addressed to Captain John McKenzie and another I had written to Master Alexander. I feel a little sorry on account of the two latter because they were written in a jocose style and perhaps rather too free, however they contained nothing of *treason!* or *obscenity*.

I hope the system of such lawless deeds will soon meet with its due merit, altho' no fears on that account seem to trouble the Hudson's Bay Gentry, since it is currently reported, and I believe as currently credited, that a *guard* is again to seize persons, &c., at the same place this year, which will perhaps occasion bloodshed again, for I understand our gentlemen are determined to resist such unjustifiable aggressions if any attempts are made to follow up this plan in future. Indeed, I cannot conceive what is the benefit of laws to society when daring persons may evade or act in defiance of them.

The Act of Parliament extending the jurisdiction of the Canada Courts of Justice to the trial of offences committed in the wild parts ought also, I think, to have suggested something to protect individuals residing in the country from violence and oppression. A poor man might live and die a slave before he could find means to convey himself to Canada to have his wrongs redressed. How, also, are we to have satisfaction afforded to us if any of our people are murdered by the Natives? We have no legislature residing in the country to have recourse to; but perhaps I may be told that my narrow understanding is too shallow to comprehend the extent of the Legislature's meaning in the enactment of laws for the Indian territories; that may be, and probably is so, tho' I am still convinced that some may obtain redress whilst, on the other hand, hundreds may be oppressed thereby, an instance of which we have in the late trials in Upper Canada.

No doubt some will say, "why do we leave our country to expose ourselves to such vexations"? that is likewise true, but I believe that if commerce was confined solely to a single province, or even a kingdom, what would the revenue for the support of Government then be? I think loaves and fishes would then be as little sought after as a beggar's wallet is now.

Perhaps I am too free; therefore humbly request you will please pardon the liberty I have taken, and accept the following as an imperfect though true situation of affairs in this country, which I might have stated more correctly at length, if my orders were not in opposition to it, on account of the apprehensions entertained by our people that our letters may again fall into the hands of our rivals, and afford them much useful information, if not likewise handles for fresh prosecutions and more expense.

This consideration requires that I should be more than usually reserved on the present situation of both companies' affairs and

probable issue of returns this year. In fact the Natives are so much disorganized in Athabasca, that if they are in the same train of living in other parts of the North-West, it will not be too much to say that the fur trade is ruined for some years to come. The Whites at present possess but a faint resemblance of that influence which they formerly turned so well to their own emolument and thereby also to the benefit of their country.

How long this contest is yet to continue a subject of regret to every good man is still in the bosom of time, no one knows. The weight of purses may serve to keep alive expenses and loss, and, by that means, lengthen the contest, but, eventually, both parties may find themselves involved in the same ruin, for whichever side preponderates, must remain a long while in possession of the country before they can expect to retrieve their affairs in a sufficient manner to afford them profit, and then, it may be yet a matter of doubt if it will be practicable to bring back the Natives to assume their former habits and industry. It may perhaps turn out that many of the most respectable traders now in the country will be obliged, from age, broken constitutions and other infirmities, to retire before the termination of the existing troubles, or remain to leave their bones in the country where golden dreams attracted them, with the melancholy reflection of having lost their all amongst savage nations and in savage parts. Sad consolation!!!

This has been the fate of the unfortunate Mr. Benjamin Fro-  
 bisher who had been seized and detained a prisoner by the  
 Hudson's Bay Company's servants at Jack River the preceding  
 year. In September last he made his escape with two of his  
 men, fellow prisoners, and, after undergoing and surmounting  
 incredible privations and difficulties, he found himself so weak-  
 ened for want of subsistence, that he was obliged, in *Lac Bourbon*,  
 to desire his companions in sufferings to make the best of their  
 way to the nearest establishment, if their strength would allow  
 them, and procure him assistance.

Death of  
 Mr. B.  
 Frobisher.



The two men reluctantly left him at *Pointe-au-Lièvre*, in the forementioned lake, and had the good fortune to reach one of the North-West Company's establishments at a place called Moose Lake, in the vicinity of Cumberland House and under the care of Mr. George Nelson who, on hearing of the situation of Mr. Frobisher, immediately sent some of his men with provisions, dogs, &c., &c., to convey him to the Fort. Sad however to relate, his generous endeavours were exerted too late, for his men found only the remains of poor Mr. Frobisher in the same place where he had been left, but in a situation sufficiently distressing to draw a tear from the eyes even of his enemies, for half his body was burned or rather consumed by the fire in the encampment.

The two men interred him on the spot which the fire had thawed and returned to the fort with the melancholy account. They found (and brought to Mr. Nelson) in the pocket of the deceased a kind of Journal which had been kept in pencil on scraps of paper by this unfortunate gentleman and containing a narrative of his sufferings from the time of his arrest until within a short period of his death. This document is now in the hands of Mr. William Connolly (1) who manages the Company's concerns at Cumberland House.

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(1) Mr. William Connolly, on joining the North-West Company, in 1802, was sent to the Athabasca District where he married, *à la façon du pays*, a young Creole girl by whom he had several children. After having made a handsome fortune in the service of the North-West and Hudson Bay Companies, he returned to Lower Canada, in 1831, taking down with him his Indian wife and children whom he settled at St. Eustache.

Mr. Connolly, soon after his return, married, at l'Assomption, a Miss Woolrich, by whom he also had children. He then sent back his "Squaw" to the North-West and had her properly taken care of in the Convent of St. Boniface where she died.

The validity of these two marriages was, soon after the death of Mrs. Connolly—Miss Woolrich—tested in the Courts of law at the instance of one of Mr. Connolly's sons by his Indian wife, who brought in an action against his father's estate for the recovery of the alleged rights of his mother consequent upon her marriage which, he claimed, was regular, having been contracted *à la façon des pays d'en haut*.

This *cause célèbre* is fully reported in the 1st volume of *La Revue Légale*, published by Messrs. Mathieu & Germain, of Sorol.

Messrs. A. Shaw and George MacTavish, we have been informed, obtained and took their passage for England last Fall on board of one of the Hudson's Bay Company's ships. Mr. John Duncan Campbell, with a number of other prisoners, *engagés* of the North-West Company, are reported to have been sent to Albany or Moose Factory as a prelude to their conveyance to Canada, in order to bring them before the Courts of Justice of these provinces, to answer the charges the Hudson's Bay Company have against them. Amongst the number of the *engagés* is old Joseph Paul, the famous pugilist.

This, Sir, is one item of the oppression emanating from bench warrants sent to this country by the Attorney-General of Lower Canada, and obtained through the influence of a titled, envious, or rather covetous individual. Thus confusion keeps pace with loss in the country. We are likewise led into a belief that several other Gentlemen and *engagés*, against whom warrants are said to have been issued, are to be seized this spring, on their way out by the Hudson's Bay Company, and perhaps the packs also. It is this circumstance which makes me fear that blood will again be spilled, for our people go out armed and fully determined to defend themselves against such lawless aggressions.

Respecting the Colony in Red River, accounts from that Famine in Red River. quarter mention that all their crops of the preceding season had been destroyed by grasshoppers, a kind of locust. Nothing escaped the voracity of these insects; wheat, barley, potatoes, all were destroyed, and fire having overrun the plains in Red River, buffaloes had become so scarce that none were to be found nearer than at the upper part of Pembina River, so that the poor colonists were reduced to great distress and want. Some of them have been running throughout the country up to Cumberland and *Lac La Pluie* to obtain seed for the ensuing season.

Such is the information given by our gentlemen of the Red River concerning this land of *milk and honey*! Forty souls, principally Germans, have arrived at the Bay for settlement; this number will only increase the number of victims sacrificed to the sinister views of a noble impostor. Surely, Government might institute an enquiry into the truth of all these circumstances, I mean the possibility of establishing and supporting a settlement in that country, as well as to ascertain whether the ground is fit for cultivation, and likely to yield subsistence to the number of poor families attracted thither by the plausible and fanciful insinuations of the Earl of Selkirk and of his agents. Certainly, the Legislature could not act a more generous part in support of humanity than rescue so many poor people from untimely death and sufferings scarcely to be believed.

These Colonists imported with them the measles and chincough, which have been so fatal among the Natives, that one fifth of the population of the country is said to have been destroyed all the way from Lac La Pluie to Athabasca, so that it would seem as if Governor Semple, as he was styled, from a presage of what might happen, had prophesied this melancholy accident, when he wrote to Mr. Alexander MacDonell at Qu'appelle, in 1816, that "he possessed means to make his power felt, the shock of which should reach from Montreal to Athabasca." Such is now the state of a country which once seemed to have attracted the envy even of sovereigns.

Sir John  
Franklin's  
expedition.

It is however with sincere pleasure I turn from this disagreeable subject to one of a more pleasing and interesting nature, no doubt more interesting on account of its novelty, and the noise a scene so new in these parts occasions amongst all classes of people, tho' the intent and purpose must conceal some mystery which may be developed hereafter.

On the 26th of March, the Commander of an expedition equipped by His Majesty's Government in England arrived at Fort Chipewean and delivered a general circular from Mr. Simon McGillivray, a copy of which I herewith enclose and therefore, beg leave to refer to it for the object and other particulars respecting the enterprise. To this letter I have taken the liberty of subjoining the copy of another from F. Franklin (Lieutenant of the Royal Navy and Commander of the expedition), dated 3rd March, from Fort Chipewyan. Both these papers may be considered as public documents on this interesting subject. As they will sufficiently explain the nature and views of this hazardous enterprise, I have only to mention that I have been appointed to settle the Indians required for leaders, guides and hunters to the expedition, in which I have so far succeeded as to have collected the choicest hunters of the Red Knife Tribe, as well as the most powerful leaders and knowing men amongst them.

The route to be taken is yet undetermined, as the Indians have two in view and wait to know which will be accepted by Lieutenant Franklin. I think, however, he will give the preference to that which takes a branch of the Martin Lake River in its way to the Coppermine River. The only seeming difficulty will be on the part of the Natives who wish to proceed by the Red Knife River which falls into Slave Lake, in the vicinity of Mountain Island, on account of its being abundantly stocked with animals, whereas they say the other way is not so plentiful in rein-deer, but yet it is the most practicable for moderately loaded north canoes.

Whatever intelligence I may hereafter obtain of the progress of this expedition, I shall take the liberty of transmitting to you, by the earliest opportunity, therefore shall conclude this long tedious scrawl with a hope that you will forgive my presumption in wishing to give an account of circumstances which will be handed to you by abler pens and more official accuracy.

— With sentiments of humble respect to Mrs. McKenzie and hearty wishes for the health and welfare of your worthy concerns, I have the honor to remain with grateful consideration and respect,

Dear Sir,

Your ever obliged and most thankful servant,

WILL FERD. WENTZEL.

To the Hon. Roderic McKenzie,  
Seigneur of Terrebonne,  
Lower Canada.

ENCLOSURE NO. 1.

(Copy.)

London, May 21st, 1819

To the Agents, Proprietors or Persons  
acting for the North-West Co.  
throughout the North-West Country.

Gentlemen,

Lieutenant Franklin, of the Royal Navy, being on the point of proceeding under the direction of His Majesty's Government upon an expedition from the shores of the Hudson's Bay to the mouth of the Coppermine River, with a view, as far as possible, to explore the Northern and North-Eastern boundary of the Continent of North America, I have to inform you, that, upon application from His Majesty's Government, I have, on behalf of

the North-West Company, promised that he and his party shall be well received by any of you, gentlemen, whom he may meet or visit in his progress through the interior of the Country, and also that you will afford every facility and assistance in your power for the prosecution of the undertaking in which he is engaged.

Lieutenant Franklin's object is one of a purely public and scientific nature and has no connection whatever with any disputes or territorial claims in discussion between us and the Hudson's Bay Company. He goes out in one of their ships because it is the shortest and most direct route for that purpose, and they have engaged to furnish supplies and means of conveyance for himself and his party throughout the whole of the Interior. His plan will probably be to endeavour to reach Fort Chipewyan this Fall, and to proceed from thence towards the Coppermine River early in Spring.

Now, if in the course of the intended route, or any other which Lieutenant Franklin may find occasion to pursue, he should find that the servants of the Hudson's Bay Company have not the means of furnishing him with the requisite supplies, it is my request and the promise which, on behalf of the North-West Company, I have made to His Majesty's Government, *not* that you should furnish clerks or servants of the Hudson Bay Company with the means of proceeding to any part of the country where they may not have previously succeeded in establishing themselves, *but* that you will, so far as your means can possibly permit, furnish canoes, men, provisions and all the requisite supplies for Lieutenant Franklin's voyage.

His party is intended to consist of two young Officers of the Navy, one medical gentleman and two seamen, besides whom he may probably engage a couple of Orkney men who have been accustomed to live amongst the Esquimaux. My idea was that

for the conveyance of themselves, their instruments and provisions, they would require two north canoes, but Sir Alexander MacKenzie has suggested that one north canoe with Canadian *voyageurs*, and six small Indian canoes, would be a fitter outfit for the route from Fort Chipewyan to the Coppermine River. In deciding any question of this kind and in any other question which may arise, I trust you will afford Lieutenant Franklin every assistance and information in your power, and I trust you can be at no loss to provide such conveyances and supplies as may be deemed the fittest for his purpose. In the event of your having to furnish canoes and men for Lieutenant Franklin's expedition, it will of course be proper that you send with them, an experienced clerk, accustomed to voyaging and to the habits of the Indians on the proposed route. The men must be engaged to attend Lieutenant Franklin for such time and to such countries as he may find occasion to require their services; and for any extra remuneration which it may be necessary to give them, as well as for their engagements, and for the outfits and supplies which you may furnish to Lieutenant Franklin, and which are to be paid for by Government, you will please to take his receipts and transmit the same with accounts of the particulars to the Agents at Fort William.

I remain always Gentlemen,

Your faithful obedient servant,

(Signed) SIMON MACGILLIVRAY.

A true copy from one by

George Keith, Esq.

W. F. WENTZEL.

## ENCLOSURE NO. 2.

(Copy)

Fort Chipewyan, March 3rd, 1820.

Sir,

Mr. Keith has informed me of his intention to communicate to you the arrival of the expedition equipped by His Majesty's Government under my command, and to forward the copy of the general circular from Mr. Simon MacGillivray, addressed to the Partners of the North-West Company. I need not, therefore, I presume, offer any apology or hesitate in soliciting your assistance in promoting our advance and forwarding our pursuits.

The objects the expedition has in view are two fold: first to reach the northern coast of America, and then endeavour to trace its north-east termination. The manner of proceeding to effect these must depend on the information to be derived from the Indians who are most conversant with that line of country. Such men, I am informed, principally resort to Slave Lake, and it is from thence only that guides, hunters and interpreters can be procured to accompany and conduct the Party.

The route which I should prefer taking would be nearly North from Great Slave Lake, and, from the information Beau-lieu has given, I am inclined to hope a passage may be made up a river which falls into the Slave Lake near Mountain Island; from thence, by crossing lakes and portages, into the Coppermine River which communicates directly with the sea; but you will be able to obtain from other men of equal, if not greater experience, positive assurance as to the possibility and practicability of proceeding this way with moderately loaded canoes.



The principal reasons for my writing at present, are to request you will have the goodness to communicate to the Indians generally the arrival and nature of the expedition; to solicit your aid in collecting all the information possible from the different persons who frequent your Fort, and your endeavours to procure guides, hunters and interpreters to accompany the expedition.

Your local knowledge and experience will enable you to judge better than myself what number of these may be required for the guidance and support of the party. The number of men we shall take has not yet been determined upon. I do not imagine, the party, including officers, will amount to more than two and twenty persons, a force amply sufficient, I apprehend, to ensure safety and protection. Nor can it be determined until the Gentlemen arrive here in Spring what number of canoes we may have, but these are arrangements quite independant of the Indians, who will proceed, I am informed, in their own canoes.

Sir Alex. McKenzie strongly recommends that the Indians should be accompanied by their wives as a measure of security, and that the selection should be made of men who had small families. ~~Women too would be extremely useful in preparing skins, making shoes, clothes, &c., during the next winter which we shall certainly have to pass in some convenient and favorable situation near the coast.~~ I should wish therefore that some might be engaged to accompany their husbands for those purposes and receive a proportionate compensation.

As soon as the water opens and the necessary arrangements have been completed here respecting men, provisions, &c., I shall proceed to Great Slave Lake with my present companion, Mr. Back (and there await the arrival of the rest of my party from Cumberland House) with a view of having communication with you and seeing the Indians, whom I hope to meet there;

in the mean time I shall be happy should the opportunity offer of these men returning to receive your opinion as to the route proposed to be taken, or any other information or suggestions relating to the country, or the manner best adapted for our future proceedings which you may do me the favor to communicate.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

(Signed), FRD: FRANKLIN,

Lieut. Royal Navy and

Commander of the Expedition.

Addressed,

“On His Majesty’s service.

“To Edward Smith, Esquire,

“Partner North-West Company,

“Great Slave Lake.”

(A true copy by J.W.F. Wentzel.)

## LETTER No. 11.

Latitude 64° 28' 30". N. Longitude 113° of W.

Winter Lake, Fort Enterprise, near Copper Mine River.

March, 26th, 1721.

Dear Sir,

Franklin's  
expedition.

When I had the pleasure of closing my letter to you last spring, I expected to have had also the satisfaction, in a future communication, to continue the information on the progress of the expedition which had arrived in the country on a mission of discovery, little suspecting at the time that I was destined to become a party concerned in its pursuits and subjected to an order of secrecy, or rather silence, in my correspondence to my friends on some matters connected with the general objects which the expedition had in view. It seems, by the Commander's discourse, to be his determined plan not to allow any intelligence to transpire that embraces *particular points*, until it has previously been approved and ordered for publication by the Right Honorable Earl Bathurst, secretary of State for the War and Colonial Department. Nevertheless, I am at liberty to mention that the party will endeavour to reach Churchill, and, in order to facilitate an understanding with the Esquimaux, supposed to inhabit the sea coast in that direction, two men of that nation have been sent from Churchill and are now with us to serve as interpreters. Our Company consists at present of four officers, nineteen Canadians, one sailor, the two Esquimaux mentioned above and myself. To support this establishment and provide provisions, as well as the management of the Canadians, was

entrusted to me. Six hunters of the Red Knife or Copper Indians have been found sufficient to supply us with the means of subsistence. Indeed it was scarcely possible for people to want where the Rein-deers are in thousands and not difficult to approach; so little skill in hunting does it require that any man who can level a fire arm would live with little trouble or care.

Our house stands on the borders of the last woods, our future march will consequently be directed through a barren country, broken by stony hills, intersected by numerous lakes and deprived of all vegetation, excepting a few crowberry plants and the mosses which afford nourishment to the immense herds of rein-deer that crowd the mountains.

This season is considered by residents in the country to have been very mild, yet in the month of December the thermometer descended to fifty-seven and a half degrees below zero, since that it did not sink below forty-nine. The Officers have visited Coppermine River and report it to be a large stream distant fifty-six miles from hence, and our dwelling is found by observation to be one hundred and thirty-three geographical miles from the borders of Great Slave Lake. The instruments which form the equipment of the party are sextants, two azimuthal compasses, besides pocket compasses, dipping needles and a transit instrument, spy glasses, paints, &c. Each Officer, as well as Doctor Richardson, keeps a journal, all of which must be punctually given in to the Secretary or Admiralty office. As to myself, I keep none, since I cannot be allowed to retain it. Our Commander reads Divine service regularly every Sunday, and all who feel inclined attend. This is a novelty in these parts, and highly merits to be copied by those who reside in the country.

By letters which I received last Fall from Fort Chipweyan, I am sorry to say that serious apprehensions are entertained for the fate of Mr. John Stuart and the Canadians forming his party. He had been despatched from Fort William with three canoes

bound to the Columbia and took his way through Beaver River where he was attacked by some Wood and Meadow Crees who killed two of his men, and two more were missing; four deserted to *Ile à la Croix* and brought the melancholy intelligence. One of the Athabasca canoes waited thirteen days for further informations, but none was obtained, so that all are still in suspense as to what has occurred to the party. (1) A kind of demi official report is in circulation that the Company have come to the conclusive resolve of evacuating the Columbia Department altogether.

In Athabasca, affairs seem to revive; the Natives are beginning to be surfeited by the rivalry in trade that has been carried on so long, and are heartily desirous of seeing themselves once more in peaceable times, which makes the proverb true that says "too much of a good thing is good for nothing." Besides, the Hudson's Bay Company have apparently relaxed in the extravagance of their measures; last Autumn they came in the Department with fifteen canoes only, containing each about fifteen pieces. Mr. Simpson, a gentleman from England, last Spring, superintends their business. His being a stranger and reputed a gentlemanly man, will not create much alarm, nor do I presume him formidable as an Indian trader. Indeed, Mr.

Mr. G.  
Simpson.

(1) Mr. Stnart most probably entered the North-West Company as a clerk, after the coalition of 1804. He was immediately sent to New Caledonia—British Columbia—where he spent the greater part of his first years as "a winterer." He accompanied Mr. Simon Fraser on his voyage of discovery down the Fraser River, and, by his pluck and determination, contributed considerably to its success. Mr. D. W. Harmon, in his book "A journal of voyages and travels in the interior of North America," speaks of Mr. Stnart in the highest terms, as "a warm and disinterested friend."

He was a gentleman well read, and soon attained the object of his ambition, a seat at the Board in the Council Hall, at Fort William. He remained in the North-West after the coalition of 1821 and was Chief Trader of the Hudson Bay Company at Lesser Slave Lake in 1828. He, however, a few years afterwards, left for England, where he died in 1841.

Lake Stnart and River Stuart, in British Columbia, were named after him.

Leith, who manages the concerns of the North-West Company in Athabaska, has been so liberally supplied with men and goods that it will be almost wonderful if the opposition, can make good a subsistence during the winter. Fort Chipewyan alone has an equipment of no less than seventy men, enough to crush their rivals.

Warrants are flying about the country against Governor Williams, Mr. John Clarke and a number of clerks of the Hudson's Bay Company for their daring assumption of power in the transaction of Grand-Rapid two years ago. I sincerely hope they will meet with that punishment which is due for such outrage.

Permit me to offer my humble respects to Mrs. McKenzie and best wishes to my little friend Master Alexander and his brother and sisters, nor am I forgetful of the grateful esteem and regard with which I shall ever be,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful and most obedient servant whilst

WILLARD FERDINAND WENTZEL.

To the Hon. Colonel Roderick McKenzie,

Seigneur of Terrebonne.

P. S.—Perhaps it will be interesting to you to hear that the height of the aurora borealis was measured by two of the officers of the expedition while at Cumberland House. They took its altitude at the distance of fifty miles asunder at stated periods with wooden plummet quadrants, and, by the rules of trigonometry, found it to be between six and seven miles high, from three different observations.

## LETTER No. 12.

Fort Chipewean, June 3rd, 1822.

Dear Sir,

Franklin's  
expedition.

I continued travelling with the expedition from the 15th of June to the 19th of July, when we reached the hyperborean sea. The Commander immediately proceeded to take observations and found a considerable error in the geographical calculations of Mr. Hearne, who had placed the mouth of the Coppermine river in latitude 69.30, whereas, by the more correct observations of Capt. John Franklin it was ascertained to be in latitude 67° 40 degrees north and 115.00 west longitude.

On our way down Coppermine river, we fell in with three parties of Esquimaux Indians, who, on seeing us, made all possible haste to fly from us and thus avoid an interview, altho' they could not possibly have escaped us, if the measures proposed to obtain intelligence with them had been adopted by the Commander; however, as good fortune would have it, one old man and his wife, from their infirm state, could not make good their retreat, therefore an opportunity offered and was accordingly not lost, of conferring with them, but no solid information could be derived from them respecting the sea coast or the distance we had to travel before reaching Churchill; they were ignorant of such an establishment being in existence.

The sea was open two months of the year; they lived in snow houses during winter, warmed their dwellings with lamps, cooked their victuals in stone pots, made fire with moss, killed no other kind of whales but the black whale, were

successful in their destruction of seals and fish, and generally laid up a considerable store of reindeer flesh and musk oxen meat for their winter support, and, as a proof of their independence in the way of living, tendered us the meat of several *caches* which, unfortunately for us, was so putrid that it was left untouched. This formed the sum total of the information received from this accidental *rencontre*.

Late in the afternoon of July the 19th, in consequence of the Commander's request, I was intrusted with despatches addressed to Government and ordered back to Athabasca with them and endeavour to have them dispatched to Canada by the winter-communication. Four Canadians were appointed to accompany me; the exploring party still consisted of twenty men and officers.

I travelled the most part of the way, going and coming, on foot, and after suffering no small hardships and privations, I reached Slave Lake with my party on the 29th of September and continued on agreeably to the tenor of my instructions, until the 25th of October, when I arrived at Fort Chipewean. Here I wintered, and in the month of January had the melancholy account of the death of eleven of the party who had accompanied Captain Franklin; all starved! Amongst the number, I lament to say that my friend, Lieutenant Robert Hood, was included. Captam Franklin, Lieutenant George Back and Doctor Richardson, with five men and an Esquimaux interpreter from Churchill, are the only survivors that have escaped to relate this melancholy tale.

They had surveyed a line of coast exceeding 540 miles, and after returning 250 miles on their track, took the desperate resolution of crossing the barren lands and steer their course towards Fort Enterprise. This march was commenced on the 31st of August, and it was during this journey, when obliged to wade through snow, knee deep, and unable to find fuel sufficient to thaw their frozen shoes, and without provisions to satisfy the



cravings of hunger on a march of upwards of forty days, that the fatal and truly lamentable misfortune befel the Commander of losing eleven men as above stated, who fell victims to the hardships and privations they had to undergo. This, Sir, is all I am allowed to impart at present. As the Officers themselves are now on their return to England, and go by the way of Hudson's Bay, you, no doubt, will have a more circumstantial and authentic account of all their proceedings, in the publication of their journals, which, I understand, will be printed soon after their arrival in England. Indeed, to confess an honest truth, nothing but the fear of your displeasure could have induced me to address you at this moment, when suffering under a very severe indisposition from cold and nervous complaints.

On that account I humbly beg you will excuse also from entering on the domestic concerns of this country, which will, I am persuaded, be communicated to you by abler pens than I can pretend to.

In conclusion permit me to express my sincere gratitude for your continued kindness to me and a hope that I may not be considered undeserving your future notice.....

Your ever grateful and most thankful servant,

WILL. FERD. WENTZEL.

## LETTER No. 13.

MacKenzie's River, April 10th, 1823.

Dear Sir,

Labouring under a severe fit of sickness which has much depressed my spirits, obliges me to beg you will have the goodness to forgive me should I fail in not communicating the intelligence which, I am convinced, would be most acceptable to you, and that I had most at heart to relate, touching the Land Arctic expedition and the new turn which affairs have of late taken in this country. The solitary corner from whence I date the present, has become an object of the most serious consideration of the York Factory Council, and important advantages expected to be disclosed by a number of enterprises set afloat for the discovery of every unknown parts of the mountains. Indeed, such is the spirit and avidity exhibited by the Council, that it is believed these discoveries will be extended as far as the Russian settlements on the Pacific Ocean. A party is likewise to leave Churchill Factory this Spring, consisting of fourteen persons including two Gentlemen, and proceed along the sea coast in boats, and, if necessary, to winter with the Esquimaux with whom they may happen to fall in, and then the ensuing season, to resume the prosecution of their survey and endeavour to come out in Great Slave Lake. One of the gentlemen selected to accompany the party is acknowledged to possess a sufficient knowledge of astronomy to ascertain the longitudes and latitudes of the different countries through which they shall have to travel.

I hope and wish they may not be exposed to the same difficulties and hardships which proved so fatal to the Land Arctic Projected Arctic voyages. Disclosures on Franklin's Expedition.

expedition, whose return was clouded by the loss of eleven lives, whilst the surviving officers have left in the country impressions not altogether very creditable to themselves amongst both the trading class of people and the native inhabitants. But it is doubtful whether, from the distant scene of their transactions, an authentic account of their operations will ever meet the public eye in England. It is to be presumed, as they themselves will be the publishers of the journals which will appear, that they will be cautious in not exposing their own errors and want of conduct. In fact one of the officers was candid enough to confess to me that there were circumstances which *must* not be known: however it is said that "stones sometimes speak."

During my travels, whilst employed in that enterprise, I did keep a sort of journal which, for want of paper, I have not yet put in order fit to appear or to be shown; besides it contains matter that it is not proper should appear at present, unless I had a desire to injure some which it is my interest to conceal at least for a time. One of the officers, aware of this, requested me in a particular manner to remain a year or two more in this country, I presume with a view to let the storm in some measure subside, or, what is as likely, to take advantage of my not being in the way for examination, for in the first stages of our travels, they were very strenuous in their invitation and actually pressed me to consent to accompany them to England, which, on their return, they appeared as anxious to dissuade me from. Necessity rather than persuasion, however, influenced me to remain; my means for future support are too slender for me to give up my employment, but the late revolution in the affairs of the country (1) now obliges me to leave it the ensuing year as the advan-

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(1) The coalition of the Hudson Bay Company with the North-West Company, in 1821.

tages and prospects are too discouraging to hold forth a probability of clearing one penny for future support. Salaries do not exceed £100 sterling, out of which clerks must purchase every necessary, even tobacco, and the prices of goods at the Bay are at the rate of 150 to 300 per cent. on prime cost, therefore shall take this opportunity of humbly requesting your advice how I may settle my little earnings, which do not much exceed £500, to the best advantage. I have no friend or acquaintance in Canada to whom I can apply with the same confidence; your condescension, Sir, in this subject will be acknowledged with every becoming consideration of respectful gratitude.

In the course of the next winter I shall endeavour to bring up my journal ready; so as to hand it in for your inspection as soon as I shall reach Montreal. In the mean time, with most respectful wishes for the health and preservation of Mrs. McKenzie and family, I beg leave to conclude impressed with the most lively sentiments of gratitude for her kind remembrance and your generosity towards me; obligations never to be forgotten by,

Dear Sir,

Your thankful and most respectful servant,

WILL. FERD. WENTZEL.

## LETTER No. 14.

*(Private.)*

MacKenzie's River, March 1st, 1824.

Dear Sir,

Franklin's  
Expedi-  
tion.

I have the honor to acknowledge with respectful thanks the receipt of your friendly favor dated in April 1823 and beg you will have the goodness to accept my grateful acknowledgements for Mrs. MacKenzie's remembrance and the humble sense I feel for the favor bestowed on me by the family in general.

Last year I did myself the pleasure of writing to you on the subject of the expedition and I do not remember of writing to any but Mr. James McKenzie so much respecting that expedition as I took the liberty of stating to yourself, therefore was greatly surprised to understand from your kind epistle, that extracts from some of my letters had found their way in the public prints of Montreal. I am sure never to have authorized any thing of the kind; so far from it that it had been my particular wish to have preserved silence on that head until I could have obtained an opportunity of laying before you my journal and of craving your opinion and advice thereon. I have not seen any of the Canada public papers; few, I believe, find their way now in the North-West, otherwise should have had occasion to examine the paragraphs touching that subject and have known if they had formed part of my correspondence to Canada.

This much however may be safely said of the officers, that they acted on some occasions imprudently, injudiciously and

showed in one particular instance an unpardonable want of conduct. As to the report of some of the Canadian voyageurs having fallen a sacrifice to support others, it is currently circulated amongst the Copper Indians, and, I am sorry to say, is generally credited in this country. Some of the survivors now in Athabasca give full credit and show a desire to confirm such a belief. Besides, Doctor Richardson has published in the London papers, that Mr. Robert Hood (one of the officers) had been shot by the Iroquois, and that he, Dr. Richardson, afterwards killed the Iroquois by way of revenge for the death of his friend, and that he had concealed the deed, in order to be the first to give the sad tidings to the unfortunate Mr. Hood's friends. This intelligence has been communicated to me by Mr. James Leith, Chief Factor to the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company. I am at a loss, nevertheless, how to reconcile this declaration of Doctor Richardson with what he has written to me on the same lamentable subject, for he tells me that "Poor Hood fell a sacrifice to the hardships he was exposed to"; and in a conversation I had with Lieut. Back in the Spring at Fort Chipewean, when he was on his return to England, he very candidly told me that there had been dissensions amongst themselves and concluded with these remarkable words, "to tell the truth, Wentzel, things have taken place which *must* not be known," alluding to what befel the expedition on their way<sup>o</sup> from Coppermine River to Fort Enterprise.

Last fall, I received a letter from Captain Franklin, dated London, March the 7th, in which he states that he ordered £600 sterling to be paid me for my services to the expedition, and that he intended sending me out his journal by the ship coming to York Factory. I have not, however, heard yet of the ship's news, I am anxious to have the perusal in order to compare facts, and to know whether it would be proper for me to write every thing I know, in my journal, or to curtail some

occurrences which I could wish to do, because I find no delight in exposing circumstances which might be considered *criminal* conduct in one of the officers who has survived and been rewarded. I once had a sincere esteem for him and feel it doubly disagreeable now to accuse him of conduct for which he richly merited to be punished. Besides, his Commander is not unacquainted with the circumstance whose duty it was to have noticed it as such.

But I fear I am too tedious; therefore beg you will pardon the liberty I have taken in the foregoing, for which I have no other excuse to make than the condescension with which you have had the generosity to indulge me on former occasions, a kindness, I hope, I shall never abuse.

Altered  
condition  
in the  
North  
West.

Respecting the concerns of the North-West, little occurs that can be interesting to Canada. Furs have lost a great deal of their former value in Europe, and many of the Chief Factors and Traders would willingly compound for their shares with the Company for £1,500, in order to retire from a country which has become disgustful and irksome to all classes. Still, the returns are not altogether unprofitable, but debts, disappointments and age seem to oppress every one alike. Engagés' prices are now reduced to twenty-five pounds annually to a *boute* and twenty pounds to middlemen, without equipments or any other perquisites whatever. In fact, no class enjoys the gratuity of an equipment. Besides, the Committee at home insist upon board being paid for families residing in Posts and belonging to partners, clerks or men at the rate of two shillings for every woman and child over fourteen years of age and one shilling for every child under that age. This is complained of as a great grievance by all parties and must eventually become very hard on some who have large families to support. In short, the North-West is now beginning to be ruled with an iron rod.

Many plans are suggested for exploring the unknown parts of MacKeuzie's river, and none have been yet digested, excepting that Mr. Samuel Black is to start this Spring from the upper parts of Peace River with a clerk and eight men and proceed up Finlay's branch and, from thence, to cross the Rocky Mountains, and seek for a large river said to follow this range of heights towards the westward, from whence he is to try and make his way to MacKenzie's river. This plan appears to me to be wild and injudicious, because Mr. Black is unable to ascertain by observation in what latitude or longitude he may find himself in, and when it would be proper for him to desist from prosecuting his travels beyond the necessary limits, so as to have a sufficient time to get to MacKenzie's River. In my humble opinion, I think he should have taken his route down MacKenzie's River and cross the Rocky Mountains, from thence to the river in question and then stem the current of it. This would have afforded him more time as the further he went to the southward, the later the Fall would be. But unfortunately this quarter is less known than it ought to be, and as I intend leaving it this year for ever; I feel little interest in trying to persuade my employers of their erroneous information, convinced as I am of the little attention that would be paid to any suggestions from my little knowledge of the country.

Praying your acceptance of my respectful wishes for your health and prosperity.

I remain, dear Sir,

Your most grateful servant,

WILLD. FERD. WENTZEL,



*Lac La Pluie*, August 4th, 1818.

My dear John,

My departure for Montreal was so unexpected, in consequence of only twenty-four hours' notice from Mr. Thaine, that I could not obtain leave to go and pay my respects to Mr. and Mrs. MacKenzie, and now I am again so occupied that I cannot get an hour to write as I could wish to my friends in Montreal, for I have no less than all the Athabaska and Lesser Slave Lake departments' complement of men to equip and give advances to. Therefore you will, I am persuaded, pardon me for only writing a few lines as an acknowledgement of civilities from you which I shall always remember with secret pleasure and satisfaction.

Priests arrive in the North-West.

You will be surprised to hear that we have now no less than five priests in the country, three of whom are gone to preach the Gospel amongst the settlers of Red River and convert the Natives preparatory to their entering the regions of the Blessed, and I am sure you will join me in wishing them all the success due to their laudable and enterprising spirit. (1)

The colonists' miserable condition.

I have been to that land of promise and saw a great number of philosophers, proselytes to the Diogenes doctrine of stoicism, for the most part of the colonists have their habitations under the ground. Perhaps you will say this looks more like the Esquimaux mode of living; well, let it be so, I am willing, but I must say it is the most miserable condition a man can be

(1) In 1814, the North-West Company applied for four priests: two for Fort William and two for the interior posts, but their application could not then be granted. In 1818, Lord Selkirk renewed the application and was successful.

reduced to in this life, for I am not one of those who think that existence is sweet in any shape.

No! no! I have not *forgot Miss La F——e*; nor the pleasant moments we have passed together, the thoughts of which now make me feel the miserable state to which I am subjected more acutely than I ever did before, although by seeing me *cracking my jokes* and *cutting my capers* a person might be led to believe that I was certainly the most thoughtless mortal in existence—which I consider a misfortune that I am not.

However let my situation be what it will, I shall always recollect your father's kindness with gratitude and Mrs. McKenzie's condescension with reverence, while I am with unfeigned esteem and regard,

Very dear John

Your sincere well wisher,

WILLD. FERD. WENTZEL.

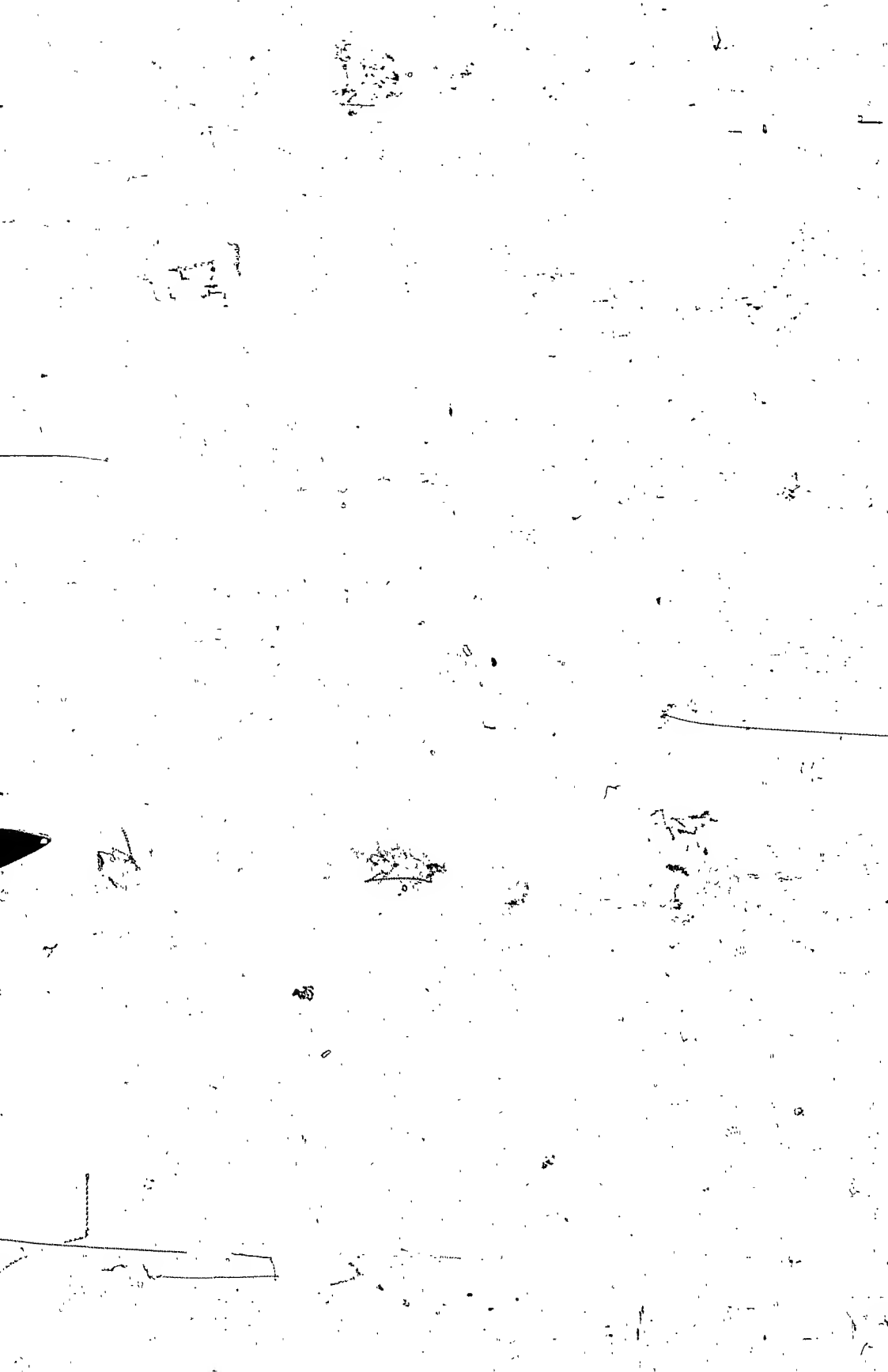
(Addressed)

To Lieut. John McKenzie,

Terrebonne,

Lower Canada.

P. S.—Pray write me long and broad next year, and be so good as to remember me to our acquaintances at Terrebonne, particularly to *vaimable Demoiselle* and the rough old Doctor Fraser.



MR SIMON FRASER

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JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE

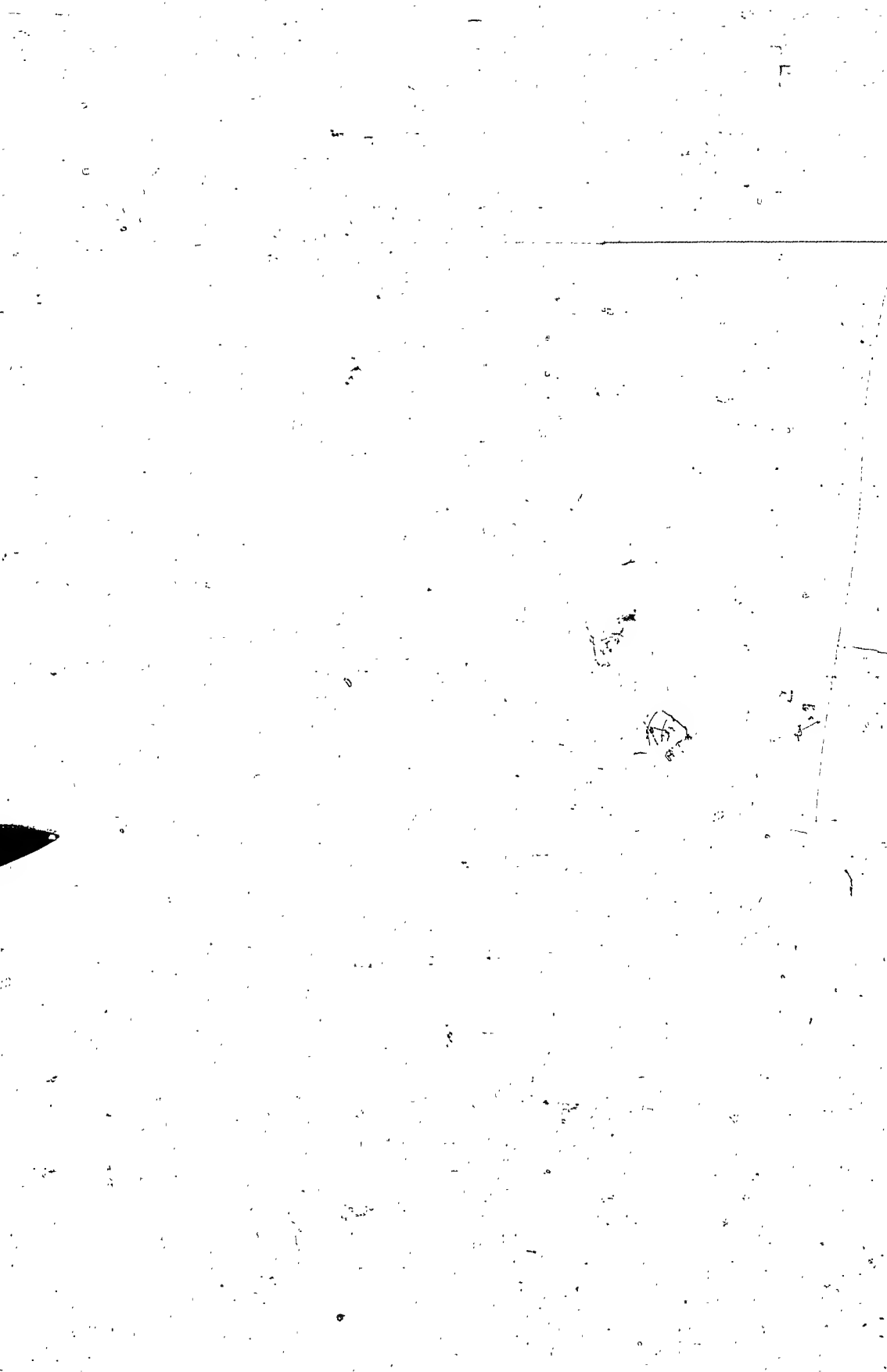
FROM THE

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

TO THE

PACIFIC COAST

1808



Having made every necessary preparation for a long voyage, 1808, May  
we embarked at 5 o'clock A.M. in four canoes at Fraser's River. 22nd, Sa-  
turday.

(1) Our crew consisted of nineteen men, two Indians, Mr. Stuart, Mr. Quesnel (2) and myself, in all twenty-four.

At this place the Columbia (3), which is about three hundred yards wide, overflows its banks and has a very strong current. Having proceeded about eighteen miles, we came to a strong rapid which we ran down, nearly wrecking one of our canoes against a precipice which forms the right bank of the river. Below this point, the channel contracts to no more than seventy yards and runs through two rocks.

After running down several considerable rapids, we put ashore at eleven A.M. for breakfast. We reembarked at one, and had fine going with a smooth current interspersed with small islands; several tombs and houses along the left bank. At 4 P.M., we passed a river eighty yards wide, on the right, which

(1) Probably the river known to-day as Nechaco River and flowing from Fraser Lake.

(2) Hon. Jules Manrice Quesnel, son of Mr. Joseph Quesnel and brother of the Hon. Frederick Anguste Quesnel.

On his return from the North-West in 1811, Mr. Quesnel resided several years in Upper Canada where he traded in partnership with a Mr. St. George and a Mr. Baldwin, a relative of the Hon. R. Baldwin. Having acquired a considerable fortune, he returned to Montreal, was appointed a Legislative Councillor and, later, a member of the Special Council and died in 1842 regretted by a very large circle of relatives and friends, who much admired his sterling qualities, his talents and energy.

Mr. Quesnel married a Miss Coté, a daughter of an independant North-West trader and a sister of Mrs. Alexis Laframboise and Mrs. François Antoine Larocque.

(3) Mr. Fraser shared in the common error prevailing at that time and believed this river to be the Columbia. He only discovered his error at the end of his journey.

we named *Bourbonneur*. Here we saw two houses which our Indians called the summer residence of a Nasquitin chief. We landed and left marks to let the Natives know we had passed. We continued our route, and encamped at 6—put our arms in order—gave ammunition to all hands and established a regular watch. We gathered wild onions for sauce.

29th, Sunday.

Cold morning.—We were under way at 4 A.M.; went ashore on an island and secured a bale of dried salmon for our return. A little lower the river contracts into a narrow space and forces its way violently between high rocks; the canoes, however, being lightened, were run down. Here we put three bales of salmon into *cache* and carried the rest through a very rugged country. It was late before we had cleared this carrying place which we called "*La Décharge de la Montagne*," and, continuing with a strong current in our favor, we passed a small river on our left. Its banks are high, composed of clay and sand, and there is a house near the entrance. We soon after came to another river where we encamped at sun set.

This afternoon we observed several houses of the Nasquitins (1). The country around has a very fine aspect, consisting of extensive plains, and, behind these, hills rising over hills. The trees in this quarter are pine, cypress, birch, hemlock, cedar, juniper, &c. At night, flashes of lightning accompanied with loud peals of thunder; and heavy rain.

30th, Monday.

We embarked at 5 A.M. and ran down a strong current. The country all along is charming and, judging from the number of houses we saw, is well inhabited. At 6, we put ashore near a large house where we found a *cache* of fish. After having taken a few salmon out of it and left their value in place, we secured the rest for its owners. We observed some vertiges of horses at this place. A little below, we left a bale of salmon *en cache*,

(1) Nas-Koo-tin, (Harmon).

which caused some delay. This country, interspersed with meadows, hills, dales and high rocks, has, on the whole, a romantic and pleasant appearance.

-Continuing our course expeditiously, we on a sudden perceived some of the Natives on the left shore who appeared to be in great confusion. We crossed to the right and landed at a large house. Our Indians then called out to the strangers on the opposite shore, informing them that we were white people going to the sea. A woman of the Atnah nation, who happened to be within hearing on our side of the river, came running towards us, speaking as loud as possible, but our interpreter could not understand her; she nevertheless continued speaking and endeavoured to supply the deficiency in language by signs. She so continued, at times addressing the people on the other side, then speaking to us. We, in the mean time, crossed over, but were still on the water edge when couriers were despatched on horseback with the news to the next Indians, and we only found a man, a woman with three children of the Atnah nation at the campment, all much alarmed at our appearance. Among them we discovered a young boy whose mother was of the Tahowtin (1) nation who understood a little of the Carrier (2) language. He informed us that in consequence of the couriers just sent off, many Natives would make their appearance in the course of the day, and that it would be dangerous for us to proceed before our intentions were publicly known throughout the country. This information, added to the desire of procuring guides, induced us to remain the rest of the day.

In the afternoon, some Tahowtins and Atnaughts (3) arrived on horseback; they seemed peaceably inclined and happy to see

(1) *Nate-ote-tain*: Harmon. They lived on the Natcootin River. Cox, "Adventures on the Columbia," calls them, Talkotins.

(2) *Tacullies*: Harmon.

(3) The Atnah or Chin Indians occupied a region of about 100 miles south and south-east of Fort Alexandria. Cox.



us, and observed that, having heard by their neighbours that white people were to visit their country this season, they had remained near the route to receive us.

According to the accounts we received here, the river below is but a succession of falls and cascades which we would find impossible to pass, not only on account of the difficulties of the channel, but from the extreme ruggedness and the mountainous character of the surrounding country. Their opinion, therefore, was that we should discontinue our voyage and remain with them. I remarked that our determination of going on was fixed; they then informed us that, at the next camp, the Great Chief of the Atnaugh nation had a slave who had been to the sea and which he might probably give us as a guide.

Fire-arms. These Indians had heard of fire-arms, but had never seen any, and they evinced a great desire of seeing ours and obtaining explanations as to their use. In compliance, we fired several shots whose reports astonished them so as to make them drop off their legs. Upon recovering from their surprise, we made them examine their effect. They appeared quite uneasy on seeing the marks on the trees and observed that the Indians in that quarter were good and peaceable, and would never make use of their arms to annoy white people; yet they remarked that we ought to be on our guard, and proceed with great care when approaching villages, for, should we surprise the Natives, they might take us as enemies, and, through fear, attack us with their arrows. Here we lost our swivel; it had a flaw before and, perhaps on account of an overcharge, it broke into pieces and wounded our gunner. This accident alarmed the Indians, but having succeeded in convincing them that it was of no great consequence, they were satisfied.

The Atnah language has no affinity to any other I know, and it was by means of two different interpreters we were enabled to understand it. The men of this tribe are of a diminutive, but

active appearance; they dress in skins prepared in the hair; their weapons are bows and arrows neatly finished. The country around consists of plains well stocked with animals; some of our men who were out hunting saw plenty of deer.

After dressing the gunner's wounds and examining the condition of our fire-arms, we embarked at 5 A.M., accompanied by one of the Tahowtin Indians as an interpreter for the Atnah language. Aided by several rapids and a continual strong current, we had soon performed twelve miles and arrived at the carrying place. Here the canoes, being lightened of half their loads, were run down; the other half was carried by land for two miles through a very uneven country.

The Chief and the Indians recommended to our attention yesterday and who were encamped on a hill to the left, soon joined us and presented us with dried salmon and different kinds of roots; the last, we could not well relish, though highly recommended by them. After enquiring repeatedly for the slave who had a knowledge of the country below, he was at last introduced. To form an estimate of his capacity, I had two oil cloths spread out for the ground of a chart upon which I desired him to sketch the country towards the sea. This he readily undertook, but his endeavours soon convinced me that his stock of knowledge was very slender indeed, for his lines were entirely directed by an elderly man, a relation of the chief, who stood by him. We could however plainly see in his sketch a confirmation of what had been told us of the difficulties of the navigation and, thereby, the necessity of leaving our canoes, with as much of our baggage as we could spare, in order to continue our journey by land.

The Chief, who had been an advocate of our cause, spoke much in our favor to his own people. He assured us that the next nation were good Indians and would be kind to white strangers. Having given to our new friend a hint that trading

31st, Tuesday.

The guide.

Desire of the Indians for trading posts.

The old  
chief.

posts would be established in his country within a short period, he immediately offered to accompany us himself all the way, remarking, at the same time, that he was well known, and that his experience and influence would be found of great consequence to our security and success. Then his brother presented me with a fine beaver skin and a well dressed deer skin, and recommended the Chief to our particular protection. I thanked him for his presents and assured him that every attention should be paid to his relation, and that, besides, he would be handsomely rewarded for his trouble on our return.

When this ceremony was over, the Chief, his slave, and our Tahowtin interpreter having got ready, took their departure, but the last was unwilling to proceed, alledging for excuse that his wife and children would be subject to starvation in his absence; we however prevailed upon him to proceed. At the lower end of the carrying place, we met eighteen men who had come to see us; I shook hands with them; they surveyed us closely, but were friendly inclined. This tribe is extremely fond of smoking and were very troublesome, always plaguing us for our pipes. They make use, in lieu of tobacco, of a kind of weed mixed with fat. The Chief showed us a calumet which had found its way from the lower parts of the river.

We left four bales of salmon in charge of the Chief's brother and proceeded down a strong current through many bad places until late in the afternoon, when we came to a very long rapid which, upon visiting, we found strong and dangerous. It being nearly night, we encamped. It blew a hurricane from the south the whole of this afternoon which rendered our progress slow, tedious and often dangerous; at times, our canoes were not manageable and within an ace of filling or of being dashed to pieces against the rocks. While visiting the rapids, we observed some Indians on the opposite side of the river, but they did not

see us. We inquired of the Chief if the Natives were in the habit of running down this rapid; he said no, as he thought that the whirlpools would swallow up any canoes or overpower any exertions of his nation, but added that his confidence in our superiority over them was such that he would not hesitate to accompany us wherever we thought proper to venture. Being, notwithstanding this profession, apprehensive lest the old man should regret his undertaking and give us the slip in the course of the night, I had his bed made in my tent by way of security. Before he went to rest, he recommended me to have all our guns and pistols in good order in case of surprise from enemies. "Though the Indians," continued he, "are generally good people, still there may be bad men among them who will go about in the dark."

This morning at an early hour all hands were ready and the Natives began to appear from every quarter in great numbers. Mr. Stuart, six men and myself went again to visit the rapid; we found it about two miles long, with high and steep banks which contracted the channel in many places to forty or fifty yards. This immense body of water passing through this narrow space in a turbulent manner, forming numerous gulfs and cascades and making a tremendous noise, had an awful and forbidding appearance. Nevertheless, since it was considered as next to impossible to carry the canoes across the land on account of the height and steepness of the hills, it was resolved to venture them down this dangerous pass.

Leaving Mr. Stuart and two men at the lower end of the rapid in order to watch the motions of the Natives, I returned with the other four men to the camp. Immediately on my arrival, I ordered the five best men out of the crews into a canoe lightly loaded, and the canoe was in a moment under way. After passing the first cascade, she lost her course and was drawn into the eddy where she was whirled about for a considerable

Indian notion of white men's superiority.

JUNE, 1st, Wednesday.

Disaster to a canoe.

time, seemingly in suspense whether to sink or swim, the men having no power over her. However, she took a favourable turn and by degrees was led from this dangerous vortex again into the stream. In this manner she continued, flying from one danger to another until the last cascade but one, where, in spite of every effort, the whirlpools forced her against a low projecting rock. Upon this, the men debarked, saved their own lives and contrived to save the property, but the greatest difficulty was still ahead, and to continue by water would be the way to certain destruction.

During this distressing scene, we were on shore looking on and anxiously concerned; seeing our poor fellows once more safe afforded us as much satisfaction as to themselves and we hastened to their assistance, but their situation rendered our approach perilous and difficult. The bank was extremely high and steep, and we had to plunge our daggers at intervals into the ground to check our speed, as otherwise we were exposed to slide into the river. We cut steps in the declivity, fastened a line to the front of the canoe, with which some of the men ascended in order to haul it up, while the others supported it upon their arms. In this manner our situation was most precarious; our lives hung, as it were, upon a thread, as the failure of the line or a false step of one of the men might have hurled the whole of us into Eternity. However, we fortunately cleared the bank before dark.

The men who had the rest of the baggage in charge perceiving, from these difficulties, the impossibility of attempting the rapid with safety, began to carry, and had immense high hills to ascend with heavy loads on their backs.

Numbers of Natives came to see us in the course of the day and remained. They assured us that the navigation for a certain distance below was impracticable, and advised us to leave our canoes in their charge and proceed on our journey by land to

a great river that flows from the left into this communication (1). The country, they said, consisted of plains, and the journey could be performed with horses in four or five days, thence we should have smooth water to the sea. But going to the sea by an indirect way was not the object of the undertaking; I therefore would not deviate and continued our route according to my original intention.

The Indians seemed pleased in our company; they carried no arms, and this confidence, I suppose, was meant as a testimony of their friendship. There is a tribe of Carriers among them who inhabit the banks of a large river which flows to the right; they call themselves Chilk-hodins. About sixty Indians were present on this occasion, and as many more were on the opposite shore hawling to send for them, but, as their presence could be of no service to us, we thought it more advisable to dispense with their company as much as possible.

The river had risen eight feet within these twenty four hours; <sup>2nd Thursday.</sup> more Indians arrived: all hands were hard at work carrying the baggage and, with the assistance of the Indians and of the line, two of the canoes were hauled up the hill. Seeing the difficulties attending this experiment, we came to the determination of leaving the other canoes and part of the provisions. Mr. Stuart and some of the men agreed to go by land, but on application to the Indians for the horses they had promised, we received evasive answers and passed the rest of the day in anxious suspense.

The Indians having deceived me, I was under the necessity of <sup>3rd Friday.</sup> deranging my plans of yesterday and, this morning, had one more of the canoes taken up the hill, so that all the party might continue by water. We could procure only four horses; these were of service in the carrying place where the road is exces-

(1) The Thompson River.

sively bad, being continually up and down hill and sometimes along the edge of dangerous declivities over which a horse with Mr. Stuart's desk and our medicine chest tumbled and were lost.

The canoes and the other articles which remained, I gave in charge to an Indian who, we were assured, was an honest, good man. The Indians made us understand that within a couple of days more we should come to a plentiful country where the people were hospitable, but having by this time acquired sufficient knowledge of the character of our new councillors, we became more careful, gave them civil answers, but, in all, followed the dictates of our own judgement.

The Atnahs ;  
their residences.



This is called the Atnah nation ; their country is well stocked with large animals, and they consequently pay very little attention to fishing. In summer, they reside in shades, and their winter quarters, which are built underground, are square below diminishing gradually in size to the top, where there is a small aperture which serves the double purpose of door and chimney, while a post with notches answers for stairs.

Their appearance.

The Atnah wish to be friendly to strangers. The men are tall and slender, of a serious disposition and inclined to industry : they say they never sing nor dance, but we observed them playing at hasard, a game well known among the Indians of Athabasca. They besmear their bodies with oil and red earth and paint their faces in different colours : their dress is leather. They are great travellers and have been at war beyond the *Rocky Mountains*, where they saw buffaloes. Seeing our powder horns, they knew them to be of that animal. They informed us that white people had lately passed down the first large river to the left ; these were supposed to be some of our friends from the department of *Fort des Prairies* (1).

(1) Mr. D. Thompson, who, in 1806, crossed the Rocky Mountains, going up the North Saskatchewan.

It was late this morning before we got ready. Last night, an Indian, who seemed to be well acquainted with the river, promised to accompany us, but this morning declined, saying he was afraid of the rapids; another brought us a pistol which Mr. Quesnel lost yesterday while on horseback; this was a piece of honesty we hardly expected, though, I must say, that during the whole time we were there, and although many things were let loose and scattered about in such a manner as to afford all opportunity to the Natives, nothing went astray. The Athahs therefore seem more honest than any other tribe on this side of the Mountains.

4th, Sunday.  
Indian honesty.

These Indians do not burn the dead, but bury them in large tombs which are of a conical form, about twenty feet diameter and composed of coarse timber.

At 6 A. M., we were on the water and crossed over to the Indians who were on the opposite side. Here we observed a precipice of immense height a head which seemed to bar the river (1). Continued our course with a strong current; ran down several rapids, and came to a dangerous one in which the canoes, having shipped much water and having nearly upset, we had to land. On visiting the lower part of it and having found it very strong and full of tremendous whirlpools, we were greatly at a loss how to act. The nature of our situation however left us no choice, we were under the necessity, either of running down the canoes, or of abandoning them: we therefore unloaded and provided each of them with five men.

The canoe which went first having succeeded, the other two immediately followed. The struggles which the men on this trial experienced between the whirlpools and the rocks almost exhausted their strength, the canoes having been in continual danger of sinking or of being broken to pieces; it was a desperate undertaking!

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(1) The "Bar Rock".



Dangerous  
carrying  
place.

After escaping this danger the men returned by land for the baggage. This task was as difficult and dangerous as going by water, being obliged to pass on a declivity which formed the border of a huge precipice, on loose stones and gravel which constantly gave way under their feet. One of them, who had lost the path, got into a most intricate and perilous situation. With a large package on his back, he got so engaged among the rocks that he could neither move forward nor backward, nor yet unload himself, without imminent danger. Seeing this poor fellow in such an awkward and dangerous predicament, I crawled, not without great risk, to his assistance, and saved his life by causing his load to drop from his back over the precipice into the river. This carrying place, two miles long, had so shattered our shoes that our feet became quite sore and full of blisters.

5th, Mon-  
day.

Fine weather. In the night, the water lowered about two feet; we were off at five; good going, as a strong current with several rapids were in our favor. At 9, we landed at the head of a dangerous place. The river, which is not, here, over thirty yards wide, passes between two precipices and is turbulent, noisy and awful to behold. The carrying place is at least a mile long, the ground rough, but there is a beaten path. The men took five hours to transport the baggage across; we were all much harassed by fatigue.

Portage du  
Baril.

Here we found a horn of the Sasyan or Rocky Mountain ram. We called this *portage du baril*. About two miles below, we passed a small river on the right upon which live the Carriers we saw the other day. It runs through a fine country abounding with animals such as *orignal*, red deer, *caribou*, beaver, &c. The Natives make use of horses.

Soon after, we came to a rapid which, appearing turbulent, was visited. We then lightened the canoes and ran them down, experiencing much danger; one of the canoes was drawn into

a whirlpool so strong that it twisted off its stern, but this having happened near the bank and at the end of the rapid, the men were saved and the canoe was dragged on shore, full of water. The carrying place was along the side of a steep high hill and very bad. The country altogether looks wild. Most of the day we had a great run with a strong current and many rapids, some of which were dangerous; we encamped at 7 P.M.

Early this morning I despatched two men to examine the river, but they could not go far. The high hills, the precipices, the difficulty attending *ravines*, &c., rendered walking very painful; a pair of shoes does not last the day, and the men have their feet full of thorns. We embarked at 7, passed on with great velocity, and observed many shades or huts for fishing at the rapids. At 10, we arrived at the falls. Here the old chief informed us that we would be under the necessity of leaving our canoes; we examined the rapids and found them impracticable. Cascades and whirlpools hemmed in by huge rocks offered us a dreary prospect indeed.

I sent Mr. Quesnel and six men to examine both sides of the river for a carrying place; after an absence of three hours, they returned and informed us that there was a well beaten track on the opposite side which was about four miles long, but which passed through a wild country. We crossed over and held a consultation at which it was resolved to examine again the river before deciding on carrying the canoes. Mr. Quesnel and Mr. Stuart were ordered upon this service for next morning and we encamped.....

Fine weather. This morning, according to our plan of yesterday, the two gentlemen, accompanied by six men, one of our Indians, the interpreter and the old chief set out to examine the state of the river; the men who remained were busy mending their things. The mountains in sight were very high and covered with snow; our guide told us that they were the

highest on that communication. The trees were poplars and pines.....

8th, Thurs-  
day.

Fine weather, excessive heat all day; we examined our salmon, which is our only provisions, and discovered we had not enough for a month, however, we were told we could find plenty with the Indians along the route.

About 3 A. M., our party, abating the chief and the interpreter, returned. They had been at the *rapide covert* distant about eighteen miles and saw but one bad rapid on the way. Going out, they kept near the river and had great difficulty, and on their return, they kept on the top of the hills and had agreeable walking. They saw a band of Natives with whom our Indian remained to wait our arrival. About 6, our canoes were put in the water and we conducted them with the line down to the first cascade; the others were run down, though not without danger; fortunately the water had recently fallen several feet, otherwise we could never have ventured on these rapids; after two hours' paddling down a strong current, we encamped.

9th, Fri-  
day.

This morning, our men put on their best clothes; our two Indians having only a beaver robe and an original skin, I gave each a blanket and a *braillet*, so that we might appear to more advantage to the eyes of the new Indians we were to meet at the *rapide covert*. At 7 A. M., our arms and every thing being in due order, we embarked, and in a few hours after we were at our destination.

They ran  
the ca-  
nyon.

Here the channel contracts to about forty yards, and is enclosed by two precipices of immense height which, bending towards each other, make it narrower above than below. The water which rolls down this extraordinary passage in tumultuous waves and with great velocity, had a frightful appearance. However, it being absolutely impossible to carry the canoes by land, all hands without hesitation embarked as it were a *corps perdu* upon the mercy of this awful tide. Once engaged, the die

was cast, our great difficulty consisted in keeping the canoes within the medium or *fil d'egu*, that is, clear of the precipice on one side and from the gulfs formed by the waves on the other. Thus skimming along as fast as lightning, the crews, cool and determined, followed each other in awful silence, and when we arrived at the end, we stood gazing at each other in silent congratulation at our narrow escape from total destruction. After breathing a little we continued our course to the point where the Indians were encamped. Here we were happy to find our old friend the chief and the interpreter who immediately joined our party.

The Indians of this place drew a chart of the river below which represented it to us as a dreadful chain of apparently insurmountable difficulties; at the same time they blamed us for venturing so far with our canoes and for not passing by land, as advised by the old chief on a former occasion, asserting that this communication, both by land and by water, would in some places be found impracticable to strangers, as we should have to ascend and descend mountains and precipices by means of rope ladders, &c.

I prevailed upon another Indian to embark with us as pilot, we then continued our course till late in the evening, when our pilot ordered us ashore for the night. This afternoon, the rapids were very bad, two in particular were worse if possible than any we had hitherto met with, being a continual series of cascades intercepted with rocks and bounded by precipices and mountains that seemed at times to have no end. I scarcely ever saw anything so dreary and dangerous in any country, and at present, while writing this, whatever way I turn my eyes, mountains upon mountains whose summits are covered with eternal snow, close the gloomy scene.

Our two Atnah and the Tahowtin Indians intimated a wish of going ahead to the next nation, which they call the *Askettihis*.<sup>The Askettihis.</sup>

The distance, they say, is not more than twenty five miles, or the same from here as the *rapide couvert*. I told them we should decide upon that point to-morrow, when we would have more knowledge of our situation. The weather has been very hot these two days. The water, as appears by its highest marks, has lowered ten feet.

10th, Saturday.

This morning I sent two men to examine the water; at 10, they returned and confirmed the report of the Natives, that the river was impracticable. We, consequently, immediately set to work, erected a scaffold for the canoes and placed them under a shade of branches to screen the gum from the sun; such other articles as we could not carry along, we buried in the ground. This was all done in the presence of the Indians.

11th, Sunday.

They start overland.

This morning we made a second *cache* of such articles as we should absolutely require upon our return, but this was done unknown to the Natives, as our acquaintance with them was rather too slight to merit implicit confidence. By 5 A.M., all was ready and each took charge of his own package, weighing about eighty pounds, of indispensable necessaries. The Old Chief assured us that we could not suffer from want among the Askettihs, and that we should be there in a couple of nights. The men hearing this, believed it and thought it a great hardship to carry an overplus of provisions, and therefore insisted on leaving part of their charge; but to this I would not consent and we started.

The path which we followed was along the declivity of mountains and across many ravines, where we experienced a good deal of fatigue and disagreeable walking; yet, generally speaking, we were much better off than we had reason to expect. At sunset we encamped on the side of a small river. Mr. Stuart and myself, still indulging the fond hopes of discovering an opening which would enable us to make use of the canoes, went to visit the main river which we found, as we were made to expect,

impassable. The channel was deep, cut through rocks of immense height and forming eddies and gulfs which canoes could not even approach with safety.

Fine, but hot weather; we passed several long and steep hills this morning. In some parts, the road was through a level country, but generally full of pointed stones which greatly hurt our feet; a few green spots could be observed here and there, but few or no trees. About 10 A.M., being tired and thirsty, we stopped near a rock which, from the brushwood at the foot of it, indicated the vicinity of water. Entering this thicket we observed a substance something like borax, which had a saline or sulphurous taste; a hole being dug it was slowly filled up with a nauseous liquid of which, however, we drank. <sup>12th, Monday.</sup> <sup>Saline source.</sup>

All at once, and when we least expected a surprise, seven Askettilis presented themselves before us with their bows and arrows in readiness for an attack, believing us to be enemies, but upon coming nearer, and discovering from appearances their mistake, they laid by their weapons, joined our party and shook hands. We could not, however, understand one another, our interpreter being ahead, but they accompanied us until we had overtaken him. He spoke to them and they went away, promising to return with provisions in the evening to our encampment. We went on and encamped about sunset; some of the men, being much fatigued, were displeased at our going so late. Soon after, our new friends, accompanied by our old chief who had gone ahead to the lodges of these people, joined us and brought different kinds of roots, wild onions formed into syrup, excellent dried salmon, and some berries, also a few beaver skins which were of a reddish colour.

These Indians say that the sea is about ten nights from their village. One of the old men, a very talkative fellow and, as we understood, a great warrior, had been to the sea and saw "great canoes" and white men. He observed that the chiefs of the <sup>One who saw the great canoes.</sup>

white men were well dressed and very proud, for, continued he, getting up and clapping his two hands upon his hips, then striding about the place with an air of importance, "this is the way they go."

13th; Tues-  
day.

This morning, lost some time mending our shoes. We fired several shots to show the Natives the effects of our guns, and set out at five accompanied by all the Natives with two horses; three more horsemen soon joined our party. I asked for one of the horses in order to carry part of our voyage, this the owners declined and left us. Yesterday our guides carried our bundles, but to-day they excused themselves saying they were too tired.

Shaw's  
River.

We encamped at a considerably large river which flows from the right and which we called *Shaw's River*. Here we expected to find a band of Indians who, being alarmed at our approach, took to their heels; some of the others went in search of them.

14th, Wed-  
nesday.

The country through which we passed to-day is the most savage one can imagine, yet we were in a beaten path and always in sight of the river, which we could not however approach, as its iron bound banks had a very forbidding appearance.

The Indians who went to look out for those who had run away returned and informed us that the fugitives were waiting for our arrival at the next forks. Last night, some of the Natives, having remarked that we were not white men but enemies in disguise, gave offence to our old Chief and a serious altercation took place in consequence. They stated that his tribe were their natural enemies and that some of his young men had made war upon them in the Spring. This he readily admitted, but observed that these were foolish young men who escaped without his knowledge. Seeing that the debate was growing warm, we interposed and the argument ended amicably. Then the Old Chief sent couriers ahead to inform the Natives that we were not enemies; not to be alarmed at our appearance

and to meet us without arms, at the same time he strongly recommended to us to be on our guard.

Having shaved we dressed in our best apparel and resumed our march, followed by our retinue of yesterday, but which had recruited as we went along. Having halted, one of the strangers took our interpreter's gun through curiosity, and, while examining it, raised the cock and touched the trigger; one of our men having observed him in time, threw up the muzzle as the shot was going off and thus saved the lives of some Natives who otherwise would have received the contents; such misfortune would have at once put an end to our journey and perhaps to our lives.

When we came to the Forks, the chief men, dressed in their coats of mail, advanced to meet us in order to know our dispositions before we could be admitted into their camp. Our Chief harangued them in his own language; they answered him in theirs, and we were obliged to employ three interpreters on the occasion to settle the affair. These ambassadors are of the Askettih nation; they looked manly and had really the appearance of warriors. They seemed to speak with a fluency which attracted a kind of attention indicative of applause, and our Chief conveyed our sentiments and wishes with great animation. He assured the Askettih nation that we were good people and had nothing to do with the quarrels of Indian nations.

Official reception by the Askettih.

When the conference was over, the ambassadors returned to their camp, running as fast as their legs could carry them. We immediately followed and encamped on the right bank directly opposite the village, being the best position we could find for defence in case of necessity. The Indians, without loss of time, began to cross over in their wooden canoes, and I had to shake hands with over one hundred of them, while the Old Chief was haranguing them about our good qualities, wishing, of course,



some to accompany us part of the journey. In the mean time, we spared no pains to impress upon their minds the numberless advantages which all the nations in that quarter would derive from an open communication with the white people. The Indians brought us plenty of fish, roots and berries. The mountains are still high and covered with snow; the river, we had the pleasure to understand, is navigable from this place.

15th,  
Thursday.

The Old  
Chief, the  
pilot and  
interpreter  
abandon  
them.

Bad weather this morning and we indulged ourselves longer than usual in bed. The watch having gone to rest at day light, the other who took his place did not pay due attention and we had the mortification soon after to miss the Old Chief, his country man the pilot and our Tahowtin interpreter. These useful men insinuated more than once their intention of leaving us, being afraid to continue. They behaved well, and I have reason to regret that they did not give me an opportunity of paying them for their services, but I hope to meet them again on our return.

Here we are, in a strange country, surrounded with dangers, and difficulties, among numberless tribes of savages who never saw the face of a white man; however, we shall endeavour to make the best of it. Some of the Indians who had joined us yesterday forenoon and whom we are now happy to acknowledge as old acquaintances, drew, at my request, a chart of the country from this to the sea. By this sketch, the navigation seems still very bad and difficult; at some distance to the east there is another large river which runs parallel with this to the sea (1).

Fortified  
Indian  
Metropolis.

After obtaining the information required, we prevailed upon the Indians to ferry us over to the village; having employed but one canoe which had to make three trips, this took up a considerable time. The village is a fortification of 100 feet by

(1) The North branch of the Columbia River.

24 surrounded by palisade eighteen feet high, slanting inward and lined with a shorter row which supports a shade, covered with bark, constituting the dwellings; this is the Metropolis of the Askettih nation (1).

It was not without difficulty we procured a canoe here for our voyage; the Indians after bargaining a good while consented to accept a file and a kettle in exchange; but of provisions, we could only procure thirty dried salmon. After so long a stay I was impatient to be off, and ordered the canoe to be loaded with the heaviest packages; then Mr. Stuart, one of the men and two Indians embarked, but the Indians, finding the canoe overloaded, put the man ashore and continued with Mr. Stuart. I did not relish this arrangement on account of my friend, but he thought nothing of it himself, having merely observed that he would wait for us within a short distance or at the foot of the first rapid. The other men had to carry their own things and the ammunition, the last article we considered too precious to risk out of our sight.

As soon as the canoe had doubled the first point and disappeared, we set off and walked hard in order to join Mr. Stuart and we soon arrived at the place appointed, but the canoe was not there. Alarmed for Mr. Stuart's safety, I continued with augmented speed all along the river side, followed by a number of the Natives, and it was only after travelling a distance of ten miles and coming to an Indian encampment that I overtook the canoe. Mr. Stuart could not make himself understood to his conductors, and was therefore under the necessity of going on at their pleasure. About dark, Mr. Quesnel came up with us, he had left the men encamped two miles behind.

We had seen some of these Indians before. The Askettih dress the same as the Atnahs; they are civil but would not

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(1) Near Lilloet.

part with their provisions without difficulty. They have a variety of roots, some of which taste like potatoes and are excellent. Their bows and arrows are neat; their mats with which they cover their shades are made of different materials such as grass, watap or pine roots. We observed several European articles among them, particularly a new copper tea kettle, and a gun of a large size which are probably of Russian manufacture.

16th, Friday.

This morning the men joined us; of the two canoes the Indians had, we could obtain but one, it belonged to a sick man who accepted of medicines for payment; it was in bad order and we lost some time in repairing it. At two we got ready, Mr. Stuart with two Indians went in one canoe; two men went in the other, and I, with the rest, went by land.

Upon our departure, strangers having arrived at the camp, we were called back to satisfy their curiosity; we had to obey, shook hands with them and then resumed our course. About two hours after, we came up with Mr. Stuart; he waited our arrival to inform us that he had passed through several bad and dangerous rapids and that there was a carrying place near; we had to carry every thing for upward of a mile and on a very bad road.

The HaKa-  
maugh In-  
dians.

Here we met some of the neighbouring nation called *HaKamaugh* (1) with these were two of another tribe called *Suithonie* (2), all were exceedingly well dressed in leather and on horseback. They have a great quantity of shells and blue beads, and we saw among them a broken silver brooch such as the Saulteux

(1) Called "Yackamans" by Mr. Ross Cox in his "Adventures on the Columbia River." They inhabit, north of the Columbia River, a country watered by a river called by the same name.

(2) Called "Shoshoné," by the same, page 143. They inhabit the great plains to the southward, and are also called Snake Indians, *les Serpents*.

wear. They were kind to us and assisted us at the carrying place with their horses; we put up near their camp.

Here we became acquainted with a man of the Chilkotin tribe who had left his own country when a boy, but still retained a little of the mother tongue; we made a shift to understand him. He observed that he had been to the sea by this communication, where he had seen men like us who lived in a wooden enclosure upon an island, and who had tents for the purpose of trading with the Natives in furs. He gave us a good account of the navigation and consented to accompany us as pilot. Since the departure of our Tha-how-tin interpreter, this was the only man with whom we could converse to any advantage.

At this place I saw a shield different from any I had hitherto seen; it was large enough to cover the whole body, composed of splinters of wood like the ribs of stays and neatly inclosed with twine made of hemp. An Indian who had been out hunting returned with a deer he had killed; we applied for a share of the meat, but he would not part with any. The Chief invited us to his quarters; his son, by his orders, served us upon a handsome mat and regaled us with salmon and roots; our men had some also, and they procured besides several dogs which is always a favorite dish with the Canadian *voyageurs*.

It was 7 A.M. before we could get ready. Mr. Stuart, three men and an Indian embarked in the canoes, the others with myself went as usual by land, but not before I had satisfied the Indians who assisted Mr. Stuart yesterday, the price of whose labour was a knife. In the forenoon we stopped in a camp on the right side of the river, at the same time sixteen families of Indians appeared on the opposite bank. The chief, to whom we owed the articles of yesterday and who was then our steersman, asked us to unload in order to ferry these people over with our canoes; as we could not well refuse this request, we obeyed

17th, Saturday.

and thereby lost some time. One of the strangers had a sword of a tremendous size, made of sheet iron.

We set off and continued until sunset, when we encamped. Here a great number of Indians were collected from all quarters through curiosity to see us. We found them civil and friendly.

They honour their birth places.

In the course of the day, while walking, I observed many piles of *sapin* near the road which I took for tombs, but our young men informed us that they were birth places, hence it seems that this nation honors the birth places as well as the tombs of their friends with marks of distinction.

18th, Sunday.

It rained all night, and this morning, the bad weather, added to the trouble attending a concourse of strange Indians, prolonged our stay to eight o'clock. Here we had an eye upon a canoe but the Indians, seeing our drift, sent it out of the way. Our interpreter who promised yesterday to conduct us to the sea was either sick or pretended to be so; he would not understand a word and wished to remain. We considered him, in the main, of little consequence, for I had reason to doubt the information he gave us the day before; our own interpreter having fabricated a little on that occasion.

At 3 P. M., we passed a camp of Natives; these were poor but generous, and they assisted us. Here we observed a tomb with a canoe turned upon it and near it a dog hung upon a tree. About sunset, we came to a large camp of Indians where we put up for the night; about the same time Mr. Stuart and his small-brigade appeared. He reported that he had passed several bad and dangerous rapids in the course of the day, our route also was coarse and fatiguing.

The mountains continue to be high and covered with snow (1). The Indians here are a mixture of the Askettih, and Hacamaugh;

(1) See: Geological Reports 1877-1778, Page 11 of French version. (British Columbia).

they gave us a *siffou* which was the first fresh meat we tasted since our departure. Roots are scarce, but the Indians gather a kind of moss which they make into paste, bake in ovens and which, though black, we found palatable.

Rained last night, and there was a fog in the morning. The Hacamaugh Chief went ahead to prepare the way for us; according to his account, he was the greatest man of his nation. At this place, we saw a great number of snails of different colours and which were the first of the kind I had seen in the North-West.—At 8 A. M., set out divided as yesterday; a mile below, the Natives ferried us over a large rapid river, and I obtained for an awl a passage in a canoe to the next village, a distance of three miles through strong rapids. This was the village of the chief who had left us in the morning. We were told here that the road ahead was very bad.

The Indians of this village were about four hundred souls, and some of them appeared very old. They live among mountains and enjoy pure air, are cleanly inclined and make use of wholesome food. We observed several European articles among them viz: a copper tea kettle, a brass camp kettle, a strip from a common blanket and clothing such as the Cree women wear. These things, we supposed, were brought from our settlements beyond the mountains; indeed, the Indians make us understand as much.

A better class of Indians.

After having remained some time in the village, the principal chief invited us over the river and received us at the water side, where, assisted by several others, he took me by the arm and conducted me in a moment up the hill to the camp. Here his people were sitting in rows to the number of twelve hundred, and I had to shake hand with the whole. Then the Great Chief made a long harangue, in the course of which he pointed to the Sun, to the four quarters of the World and then to us; he afterwards introduced his father who was old and blind and carried

by another man, who also made a harangue of some length. The old blind man was placed near us, and he often stretched out both his hands, through curiosity, in order to feel ours.

The Hacamaugh Indians.

The Hacamaugh nation are different, both in language and manners, from their neighbours, the Askettihis; they have many chiefs and great men and appear to be good orators, their manner of delivery is extremely handsome. We had every reason to be thankful for our reception at this place; the Indians showed us every possible attention, and supplied our wants as much as they could. We had salmon, berries, oil and roots in abundance, and our men had six dogs (1). Although our tent was pitched near the camp, we enjoyed entire peace and security during our stay.

20th. Tuesday.

Indian sincerity!

The Indians sang and danced all night; some of our men who went to see them were much amused. We obtained two wooden canoes with some difficulty; the Indians however made no price but accepted of our offers. Shortly after, a tumult arose in the camp while I was writing in the tent. I went to the door and observed an elderly man running towards me, but he was stopped by some others who were making a loud noise. I enquired into the cause; they crowded around me, the Chief spoke, and all were quiet. I then learned that Mr. Quesnel having walked in the direction of a canoe that was at some distance on the beach, the old man in question, who was the owner, thought he was going to lose it.

This affray over, we prepared for our departure. The chief pointed out three elderly men who were to accompany us to the next nation; in the mean time, I was presented with berries,

(1) Dogs were the most useful animals of these regions; the *voyageurs* considered them a great relish; the small kinds only were eaten, the large dogs were of another race, and had a rank taste. Dogs are much used by the western Indians for carrying purposes and can drag from one hundred to one hundred and fifty pounds. Harmon says he has known a pair of large dogs to drag 1,000 lb for a short distance.

roots, oil in abundance. Notwithstanding these tokens of friendship, the impression which the late disturbance made on my mind still remained. However kind savages may appear, I know that it is not in their nature to be sincere in their professions to strangers; the respect and attention we generally experience proceed from an idea that we are superior beings who are not to be overcome; at any rate, it is certain that the less familiar we are with them, the better for us.

I showed to the Indians some trading articles and asked for leather, but none was brought; I gave the chief a large knife and an awl, for which he heartily thanked us. I gave also a few trinkets to an Indian of a different nation in order that he might show them to his friends. These Forks, the Indians call The Cam- Camchin, and are formed by a large river, which is the same chin River. spoken of so often by our friend the Old Chief. From an idea that our friends of the *Fort des Prairies* department are established upon the source of it, among the mountains, we gave it the name of Thompson River.

AT 10 A.M. we embarked; now all our people were once more in canoes. Our three new guides, the Great Chief, a little fellow from whom we received much attention, and some others embarked to keep us company. Aided by heavy rapids and a strong current we, in a short time, came to a portage. Here the canoes and baggage were carried up a very steep hill; the ascent was dangerous, stones and fragments of rocks were continually giving away from our feet and rolling off in succession. One of our men was much hurt by stumbling on one of these Jackass stones, and the kettle he carried bounced into the river and was Mountain. lost. The Indians informed us that at this place, some years ago, several of their people, having lost their balance from the steps giving away, rolled down to the river in the same way and perished. We saw many graves covered with small stones



all over the place (1). I have almost forgot to mention that, on our arrival at the carrying place, one of our canoes sunk and some of our things were lost, but the crew was saved and the canoe recovered (2).

On the other side of the River, Mr. Stuart, who visited the rapids, observed many kinds of trees different from those we had hitherto seen; he also observed a mineral spring, the water of which was clear and of a strong taste, and the scum of a greenish colour. The mountains continued high and their summits were covered with snow. Two Indians from our last encampment overtook us with a piece of iron we had forgotten. We considered this as an extraordinary degree of honesty and attention, particularly in this part of the world. The chief and his friends went away the moment we had encamped.

21st, Wednesday.

Early this morning the men made a trip with two of the canoes and part of the things, which they carried more than a mile and returned for the rest. I sent Mr. Quesnel to have charge of the baggage in the absence of the men. About this time Indians appeared on the opposite bank; our guides harangued them from our side, both parties singing and dancing all the time. After breakfast, the men renewed their work, and Mr. Stuart and I remained in the tent writing.

Disaster in a rapid.

Soon after we were alarmed by the loud bawling of our guides whom we saw running full speed towards us and making signs that our people were lost in the rapid. As we could not account for this misfortune, we immediately ran over to the

(1) This locality is now called "Jackass Mountain," the gold seekers of many years after having here lost numbers of mules, which rolled down the precipice with their loads.

(2) For a description of the country and navigation of the river from Lytton, at the mouth of the Thompson, to Boston Bar and Yalo, see: Mayne's "Four years in British Columbia."—Geological reports, 1871-1872, page 23, and those of 1877-1878.—Milton and Cheadle: "The North-West Passage by Land."

baggage where we found Mr. Quesnel all alone. We inquired of him about the men; at the same time we discovered that three of the canoes were missing, but he had seen none of them, nor did he know where they were. On casting our view across the river, we remarked one of the canoes, and some of the men ashore there. From this incident we had reason to believe that the others were either ahead or had perished. We immediately directed our speed to the lower end of the rapid.

At a distance of four miles or so, we found one of our men, LaChapelle, who had carried two loads of his own share of the baggage that far; he could give us no account of the others, but supposed they were following him with their proportion. We still continued, and at last growing fatigued, and seeing no appearance of the canoes, we considered it advisable to return and keep along the bank of the river.

We had not proceeded far when we observed one of our men, Dalaire, walking slowly from the bank with a stick in his hand; and, on coming up to him, we discovered that he was so wet, so weak and exhausted that he could scarcely speak. However, after leaning a little while on his stick and recovering his breath, he informed us that, unfortunately, he and the others, finding the carrying place too long and the canoes too heavy, took it upon themselves to venture down by water; that the canoe in which he was happened to be the last in setting out.

« In the first cascade » said he « our canoe filled and upset; the foreman and the steersman got on the outside, but I, who was in the center, remained a long while underneath upon the bars; the canoe still drifting was thrown into a smooth current and the other two men finding an opportunity sprang from their situation into the water and swam ashore. The impulse occasioned by their weight in leaping off, raised one side of the canoe above the surface and, having still my recollection though I had swallowed a quantity of water, I seized the critical mo-

» ment to disentangle myself and I gained, though not without  
» struggle, the top of the canoe. By this time I found myself  
» again in the middle of the stream; here I continued astride the  
» canoe, humouring the tide as well as I could with my body to  
» preserve my balance, and, although I scarcely had time to look  
» about me, I had the satisfaction to observe the two other canoes  
» ashore near an eddy and their crews safe among the rocks.

« In the second or third cascade, (for I do not recollect which)  
» the canoe plunged from a great height into an eddy below,  
» and striking with great violence against the bottom, split in  
» two. Here I lost my recollection, which however I soon re-  
» covered and was surprised to find myself on a smooth, easy cur-  
» rent with only one half of the canoe in my arms. In this  
» condition I continued through several cascades until the stream  
» carried me into an eddy at the foot of a high and steep rock.  
» Here, my strength being exhausted, I lost my hold, a large  
» wave washed me from off the wreck among the rocks and an-  
» other, still larger, hoisted me clear on shore, where I remained,  
» you readily believe, some time motionless. At length, recov-  
» ering a little of my strength I crawled up among the rocks and  
» found myself once more safe on firm ground just as you see.»

Here he finished his melancholy tale, then pointed to the place of his landing which we went to see and were lost in astonishment, not only at his escape from the waves, but also at his courage and perseverance in affecting a passage up through a place which appeared to us a perfect precipice. Continuing our course along the bank, we found that he had drifted three miles among rapids, cascades, whirlpools, &c., all inconceivably dangerous.

Mr. Quesnel, feeling extremely anxious and concerned, left his charge and joined us, two men only remained on shore carrying the baggage and they were as ignorant as we were of the fate of the others. Sometime after, upon advancing towards the

camp, we picked up all the men on our side of the river; the men who had been thrown ashore on the other side joined us in the evening. They informed us that the Indians assisted greatly in extricating them from their difficulties; indeed, the Indians showed us every possible attention during our misfortune on this trying occasion.

All safe again, we had the happiness of encamping together as usual with our baggage. We, however, had lost one of our canoes and another we found too heavy to carry such a distance. Our guides asked permission to go and sleep at the Indian village which was below the rapids, this was granted on condition they should return early in the morning. Mr. Stuart, in course of the day, saw a snake as thick as his wrist. Small rain in the evening.

Our guides returned as they had promised. Four men were employed in bringing down the canoes by water; they made several portages in the course of the undertaking, the rest of the men carried the baggage by land. When this troublesome and fatiguing business was executed, we crossed over to the village, where we were received with loud acclamations and were generously entertained.

The number of men at this place, I found to be about one hundred and ten. The chief of the Forks and our Little Fellow came upon our arrival and introduced us to the others. I sent two men to visit the rapids, but the Indians knowing of our indiscretion of the other day, and dreading a like attempt, voluntarily transported our canoes over land to a little river beyond the rapids (1). We encamped at some distance from the village. The Chief went ahead to inform the Indians at the next village of our approach; he promised to accompany us till we had passed all the dangerous places, and the Little Fellow assured us he would not leave us before our return.

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(1) Anderson River.

The Indians having invited us to the village, Mr. Quesnel and some of the men went, and were entertained to their satisfaction with plenty of singing and dancing and received, moreover, a present of three dogs, which were most acceptable at this time, as we depended wholly upon the Natives for provisions; they, it is true, furnished us with the best they could procure, but that best was not generally palatable (1).

23rd, Fri-  
day

Rained this morning. One of the men was sick and we perceived that, one way or other, our people were getting out of order. They preferred walking to going by water in wooden canoes, particularly after their late sufferings in the rapids. I therefore embarked myself in the bow of a canoe and went down several rapids. We met some Indians and waited for the arrival of our people who had gone by land; walking was difficult, the country being exceedingly rough and uneven; crossing a carrying place, one of the men fell and broke his canoe almost to pieces.

The Nail-  
gemugh  
Indians.

The Natives from below came this far, with two canoes to assist us; they were probably sent by our friends who went ahead. In one of the rapids, Mr. Stuart's canoe filled and was nearly lost; we soon after arrived at a camp of the Natives, where we landed for the night. They numbered about one hundred and seventy and call themselves Nailgemugh; we met with a hearty welcome and were entertained with singing and dancing, &c.

The Nailgemugh nation are better supplied with the necessaries of life than any of those we have hitherto seen; their robes are of beaver, &c. We visited a tomb near the camp; it is built of boards sewed together, and about four feet square; the top is covered with cedar bark and loaded with stones. Near

(1) Berries are, to this day, the staple food of the Indians from Lytton, downwards; see: Geological Report 1871-1872, page 69.

it, on a scaffold, are two canoes, and a pole from which strips of leather, baskets, &c., are suspended. The weather is generally very hot in the day time, but at night it is commonly cold on account of the neighbourhood of eternal snows.

This morning we traded two canoes for two calico bed gowns. <sup>24th, Sa-</sup>  
 Sent some men to visit the rapids and set out at 8 A.M. <sup>turday.</sup> After going a mile, we came to a carrying place of 800 yards where Mr. Stuart had a Mer: Alt. 126° 57'; we then passed a small camp of Indians without stopping and came to a discharge with steep hills at both ends, where we experienced some difficulty in carrying the things. We ran down the canoes, but, about the middle of the rapids, two of them struck against one another, and one of them lost a piece of its stern, the steersman his paddle; after repairing the damages we continued and in the evening arrived at an Indian village. The Natives flocked about us and invited us to pass the night with them, and we were led to the camp which is at some distance up the hill.

The Indians of this encampment were upward of five hundred in number; we found our friend the Chief, and the Little Fellow with some of our acquaintances from above, and all were well treated with fresh salmon, hazel-nuts and some other nuts of an excellent quality. The small pox was in the camp and several of the Natives were marked with it. We fired several shots in order to show the Indians the use of our guns, some of them dropped down at the report.

The Chief of the Camshine returned this morning to his home, <sup>25th, Sun-</sup>  
 but his people continued with us. This man is the greatest chief <sup>day.</sup> we have seen, he behaved uncommonly well towards us, and in return I made him a present of a large silver brooch which he immediately fixed on his head, and seemed exceedingly well pleased with our attention. We embarked at 5 A. M.; after going a considerable distance, our Indians ordered us ashore and we made a portage. Here we were obliged to carry among <sup>Difficult</sup>  
<sup>pass.</sup>

loose stones in the face of a steep hill between two precipices. Near the top, where the ascent was perfectly perpendicular, one of the Indians climbed to the summit and by means of a long pole drew us up one after the other. This work took three hours, then we continued our course up and down hills and along the steep declivities of mountains where hanging rocks and projecting cliffs, at the edge of the bank of the river, made the passage so small as to render it, at times, difficult even for one person to pass sideways.

Many of the Natives from the last camp who accompanied us were of the greatest service on this intricate occasion. They went on boldly with heavy loads in places where we were obliged to hand our guns from one to another, and where the greatest precaution was required in order to pass even singly and free from encumbrance.

At about 6 P. M., we encamped at a rapid. On our arrival, I despatched M. Stuart and one of the men to examine the rapid. From the place of encampment, we observed an Indian on the opposite shore fishing salmon with a dipping net; our Indians having procured one took five salmons which, divided among forty persons, was little indeed, but better than nothing.

26th, Monday.

Exceedingly wild country.

Ladder paths.

This morning, all hands employed as yesterday: we had to pass over huge rocks assisted by the Indians. Soon after we met M. Stuart and the man who had passed the night on the top of a mountain and in sight of our smoke; they reported that the navigation was absolutely impracticable. As for the road by land, we could scarcely make our way with even only our guns. I have been for a long period among the Rocky Mountains, but have never seen any thing like this country. It is so wild that I cannot find words to describe our situation at times. We had to pass where no human being should venture; yet in those places there is a regular footpath impressed, or rather indented upon the very rocks by frequent travelling. Besides this, steps

which are formed like a ladder or the shrouds of a ship, by poles hanging to one another and crossed at certain distances with twigs, the whole suspended from the top to the foot of immense precipices and fastened at both extremities to stones and trees, furnish a safe and convenient passage to the Natives; but we, who had not had the advantage of their education and experience, were often in imminent danger when obliged to follow their example.

In the evening, we came in sight of a camp of the Natives whose chief with some others crossed over to receive us. They ferried us over and we were kindly entertained. These Indians are of the same nation as the last, but some men of a neighbouring nation, called *Achinrow* were present.

The Hacamaugh promised us canoes for the next day, and, as they were above the rapid, some of the young men went for them. It being impossible to bring them by land, or to work them down by water, they were turned adrift and left to the mercy of the current, which, passing among many shoals and rocks, might have broken them to pieces on their way down.

This morning the Indians entertained us with a specimen of their singing and dancing. We set out at 6 A. M., accompanied, as usual, by many of the Natives who assisted in carrying part of our baggage; the route we had to follow was as bad as yesterday. At 9 we came to the canoes which were sent adrift; one of them was broken and the other much damaged, and we had to lose some time in repairing them. Some of the men embarked with the things and the rest continued by land to a small camp of Indians, consisting of about sixty persons. The name of the place is Spazum (1) and is the boundary line between the Hacamaugh and Achinrow nations. Here, as usual, we were hospitably entertained with fresh salmon, boiled, green and dried berries, oil and onions.

(1) Spazum was an old Indian Chief who gave his name to the place. "Ocean to Ocean" by Rev. M. Grant.



Haca-  
maugh\_bu-  
rying  
ground,

Seeing tombs of a curious construction at the Forks on the opposite side, I asked permission of the chief to go and pay them a visit; this he readily granted and accompanied us himself. These tombs are superior to anything of the kind I saw among savages; they are about fifteen feet long and of the form of a chest of drawers. Upon the boards and posts, are beasts and birds carved in a curious but rude manner, yet pretty well proportioned. These monuments must have cost the workmen much time and labour, as they must have been destitute of proper tools for their execution; around the tombs was deposited all the property of the deceased. When we were ready for our departure, our guides observed that we had better pass the night at the camp, and that they would accompany us in the morning. Sensible from experience that a hint from these people is equal to a command, and that they would not follow had we declined, we remained.

28th, Wed-  
nesday.

We set out at 5, our things in the canoes as yesterday and we continued by land. After much trouble by land and by water for eight miles, we came to a carrying place where we were obliged to leave our canoes and to proceed on foot with our baggage. Some of the Achinrow nation apprised of our approach, came to meet us with roasted salmon. At this place, while waiting for some of our people who were behind, I examined a net of a different construction from any I had hitherto seen. It was made of thread of the size of cod lines; the meshes were sixteen inches wide, and the net eight fathoms long; with this, the Natives catch deer and other large animals.

The Achin-  
row nation.

Continued and crossed a small river on a wooden bridge. Here, the main river tumbles from rock to rock between precipices with great violence. At 11 A.M., we arrived at the first village of the Achinrow nation, where we were received with as much kindness as if we had been lost relations. Neat mats were spread for our reception, and plenty of salmon, in wooden

dishes, was placed before us. The number of people at this place is about one hundred and forty. This nation is different in language and manner from the other nations we had passed. They have rugs made from the wool of *Aspai* (1) or wild goat and from dogs hair, which are as good as the wool rugs found in Canada. We observed that the dogs were lately shorn.

We saw few or no Christian goods among them, but, from their workmanship in wood, they must be possessed of good tools, at least for that purpose. Having themselves arrived here lately, they had not as yet constructed their shades, but had a gallery of smoked boards upon which they slept. Their bows and arrows are very neat.

At 1 P.M., we renewed our march, the Natives still carrying part of our baggage; at the first point, we observed a remarkable cavern in a rock, which we found to be 50 feet deep by 35 wide; a little above it, is an excellent house 46 by 32 and constructed like American frame houses; the planks are three or four inches thick, each plank overlapping the adjoining one a couple of inches; the posts, which are very strong and rudely carved, receive the cross beams; The walls are eleven feet high and covered with a slanting roof. On the opposite side of the river, there is a considerable village, with houses similar to the one on this side.

About 4 P. M., we arrived at a camp containing about one hundred and fifty souls. Here we had plenty of salmon cooked by means of hot stones in wooden vessels. Having understood at this place that the river was navigable to the sea, we had, of course, to provide canoes if possible. We saw a number of new ones which seemed to have been hollowed with fire and then polished. The arms of these Indians consist of bows and arrows, spears and clubs, or horn *powmagans*. We saw very little or no

(1) "Shyc." Harmon.

leather, so that large animals must be scarce. Their ornaments are the same as those of the Hacamaugh nation : shells of different kinds, shell beads, brass made into pipes hanging from the neck or across the shoulders, bracelets of large brass wire, and some of horn. Their hats, which are made of wattap, have broad rims and diminish gradually to the top; some make use of cedar bark painted different colours, resembling ribbon for hats.

Both sexes are stoutly built and some of the men are handsome but I cannot say so much of the women, who seem to be their husbands' slaves, for, in the course of their dances, I remarked that the men were in the habit of pillaging them from one another. Our Little Fellow was presented with another man's wife. There was a new tomb at this place, supported on carved posts about two feet from the ground; the sculptures were neatly finished and the posts were spangled over with bright shells which shined like mercury, but the interior of the tomb emitted an abominable smell.

White men  
from below.

The Natives informed us that people like us had come from below to the Bad Rock, where the rapid terminates, at a little distance from the village, and they showed us marks indented in the rocks which they had made, but which, by the bye, seemed to us to be nothing but natural marks. In the evening, four men went off in canoes to inform the people below of our visit and intentions.

29th,  
Thursdny.

Lost some time this morning in looking out for canoes, but could not procure any. We embarked about 9 A. M., some of us with the Indians, and some without, just as best suited the Indians. The river here is wide, with a strong current and some rapids; both sides are adorned with pine trees: the mountains are still high and covered with snow. About 10, we passed a village which was the residence of the best Indians. At two, we came to a camp on an island containing about one hundred and thirty souls; here we had plenty of salmon, oil, roots and

raspberries. The Natives amused us with dancing, and after losing a couple of hours we went on, followed by several of the Natives.

At five, we came to another camp of one hundred and seventy souls. Here the Natives who had favored us with a passage in their canoes thus far left us and went home; we were, in consequence, obliged to encamp in order to wait for the convenience of the Indians of this place who promised to help us on the next morning. They were extremely civil, so much so that they inclined us to doubt their sincerity: they gave us plenty of sturgeon, oil and roots, not, however, of the best quality or flavour.

The Indians in this quarter are rather fairer than those in the interior; their heads and faces are extremely flat, their skin and hair of a reddish cast, but this cast is owing to the ingredients with which they besmear their bodies. They make, with dogs hair, rugs with stripes of different colours, crossing at right angles and resembling, at a distance, Highland plaid. Their fishing nets are of large twine and have handles of twenty feet in length. Their spears, which are of horn, have also wooden handles of great length. Here we saw a large copper kettle shaped like a jar, and a large English hatchet stamped "Sargaret", with the figure of a crown. The river at this place is more than two miles broad and is interspersed with islands.

The Natives.

It was 7 A. M. before we could procure canoes and take our departure; at eleven we came to a camp containing near four hundred souls; here, we saw a man from the sea, which we might, said he, be able to see, next day. The Indians of this place seem dirty and have an unpleasant smell; they were surprised at seeing men different from Indians coming from the interior, and made themselves extremely disagreeable to us through their curiosity and attention. The Indians who conducted us during the forenoon returned with their canoes, and,

30th, Friday.

it being some time before we could replace them, it was two o'clock before we embarked.

Continued our course with a strong current for about nine miles where the river expands into a lake. Here we saw seals and a large river coming from the left (1) and a round mountain ahead which the Natives called Stremotch (2). After sunset, we encamped upon the right side of the river. At this place, the trees were remarkably large, cedars five fathoms in circumference and proportionate height. Musquitoes were in clouds. We had nothing to eat; the Natives, who always gave us plenty of provisions in their villages, but seldom allowed us to carry anything away, had followed us in numbers to this place and were all as destitute as ourselves. Though at a great distance from home, they carried no arms about them, from which we inferred that they had full confidence either in our goodness or in their numbers.

JULY

1st, Satur-  
day.

Foggy weather this morning; clear at 4, and we embarked. The banks of the river are low and covered with wood; the current is slack, and rugged mountains surround us. At 8 A.M., we arrived at a large village; after shaking hands with a crowd, the chief invited us to his house and served us with fish and berries; our Indians were also treated with fish, berries and dried oysters in large troughs. Our Hacamaugh, commonly called Little Fellow, so often mentioned and who had been so useful to us all along, had, by this time, assumed an air of consequence from being so long of our party and ranked now with Mr. Stuart, Mr. Quesnel and myself.

The Chief made me a present of a coat of mail to make shoes; for this we may thank our little friend who also received a

(1) River Coqualla, at the mouth of which is built the town of Hope.

(2) Mount Baker.

present of white shells. I gave the Chief in return a calico gown for which he was thankful.

The Indians entertained us with songs and dances of various descriptions; the Chief stood in the centre of the dance or ring giving directions while others were beating the drum against the wall of the house and making a terrible racket. This noise alarmed our men who were at a distance and they came to see what was the cause of it.

The Indians, who had favored us with a passage to this place, went off with their canoes, and we had to look out for others, but none could be had for any consideration; at last the Chief consented to lend us his large canoe and to accompany us himself.

The number of Indians at this place was about two hundred, who had appeared at first view to be fair, but we discovered afterwards that they made use of white paint to alter their real appearance. They evinced no kind of surprise or curiosity at seeing us, nor were they afraid of our arms, so that they must have seen white people before from below.

Their houses are built of cedar planks and, in shape, similar to the one already described; the whole range, which is six hundred and forty feet long by sixty broad, is under one roof; the front is eighteen feet high and the covering is slanting: all the appartements, which are separated by partitions, are square, except the chief's, which is ninety feet long. In this room, the posts or pillars are nearly three feet diameter at the base and diminish gradually to the top. In one of these posts is an oval opening answering the purpose of a door through which one man may crawl in or out. Above, on the outside, are carved a human figure as large as life, with other figures in imitation of beasts and birds.

These buildings have no flooring, the fires are in the center and the smoke goes out by an opening at the top. The tombs

are well finished. I observed that dogs' hair was spun with a distaff and a spindle as in Europe, and made into rugs. There is some red and blue cloth among them. These Indians are not so hospitable as those above, which is probably owing to a scarcity of provisions.

The tide rose about two and a half feet; we cast our nets into the water but took no fish, the current being too strong.

2nd, Sunday.  
Trouble  
with the  
Indians.

This morning we discovered that the Natives were addicted to thieving; they stole a smoking bag from one of our party and we could not prevail upon them to restore it. The dogs in course of the night dragged out from the baggage and damaged many of our things.

I applied to the Chief in consequence of his promise of yesterday for his canoe, but he paid no attention to my request. I therefore took the canoe and had it carried to the water side, the Chief got it carried back; we again laid hold of it, he still resisted and made us understand that he was not only the greatest of his nation, but equal in force to the Sun. However, as we could not go on without the canoe, we persisted and at last gained our point. The Chief and several of the tribe accompanied us.

At 11 A.M., we arrived at a village where we were received with the usual ceremony of shaking hands, but we were not entertained as usual. The houses of this place are plain and in two rows. I received two coats of mail as a present, and will have them made into shoes.

The Indians advised us not to advance any further as the Natives of the coast or Islanders were wicked and at war with them and would, consequently, attempt to destroy us. Upon seeing us slight their advice and preparing to embark, they gathered around the canoe and dragged it out of the water, and then invited us, for the first time, to the principal house of the village. Leaving Mr. Quesnel with most of the men to guard

the canoe and baggage, Mr. Stuart with two men and myself accepted the invitation. As soon as we were in the house, the Indians began singing and dancing and making such a terrible noise near the baggage, that Mr. Stuart, suspecting foul play was intended, went to see what caused the disturbance. He found that one of the Natives had stolen a jacket out of the canoe, which, however, on application to the Chief, was immediately returned and all was quiet again.

We then made a motion to embark with the Chief, but his friends who did not approve of his going, <sup>They seize upon a</sup> flocked around him <sup>canoe.</sup> and were embracing him with as much concern and tenderness as if he was never to return. Our followers seeing this scene of apparent distress between the Chief and his connexions, changed their mind and declined going any further. Even our Little Fellow would not embark, saying he was afraid of Kaway-chin or Indians of the sea. Some of the Indians laid violent hands upon the canoe and insisted upon taking it out of the water. We paid no notice of their violence, but made them desist and embarked without them.

Proceeding on for two miles, we arrived at a place where the river divides in several channels, when we perceived a canoe following us and we waited for its arrival. One of the Indians embarked in our canoe, with a view, as we thought, of conducting us in the right channel, but we soon remarked that several other Indians from the village, armed with bows and arrows, spears, clubs, were pursuing us in their canoes, singing war songs, beating time with their paddles upon the sides of the canoes, and making signs and gestures highly inimical. The one who had embarked with us became also very unruly, singing, dancing and kicking up a great dust: we threatened him and he mended his manners and became quiet.

This was an alarming crisis, but we were not discouraged; <sup>The sea.</sup> confident upon our own superiority, at least on water, we con-



tinued and at last we came in sight of a gulf or bay of the sea; this, the Indians called *Pas-hil-roc* (1). It runs in a south-west and north-east direction. In this bay are several high and rocky islands, whose summits were covered with snow.

Misquiamc On the right shore we noticed a village called by the Natives Misquiamc: we directed our course towards it. Our turbulent passengers conducted us up a small winding river to a small lake near which the village stood: there we landed, but only found a few old men and women, the others having fled into the woods on our approach. The fort is 1500 feet in length, and 90 feet in breadth. The houses, which are constructed as those mentioned in the other places, are in rows; one of the Natives, after conducting us through all the apartments, desired us to go away, as, otherwise, the Indians would be apt to attack us. About this time, those that had followed us from above, arrived.

Having spent an hour looking about and examining the place, we went to embark, but found that the tide had ebbed and left our canoe on dry land, we therefore had to drag it some distance to the water. The Natives seeing our difficulties assumed courage and began to make their appearance from every direction, dressed in their coats of mail and howling like so many wolves, and brandishing their war clubs. We at last got into deep water and embarked; our turbulent guide no sooner found himself on board again than he began a repetition of his former pranks: he asked for our daggers, for our clothes, in fact for every thing we had. Fully convinced at length of his unfriendly disposition, we turned him ashore and made him understand, as well as the other who were by this time closing upon us, that if they did not keep at their distance we would fire upon them.

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(1). This word is not very legibly written: it may also be *Pas-hil-rou* or *Pas-hil-row*.

After this unpleasant affair, we continued until we came opposite the second village. Here, our curiosity would have incited us to go ashore, but, reflecting upon the reception we had experienced at the first and the character of the Natives, it was thought neither prudent nor necessary to run any further risk, especially as we were deficient of all provisions and saw no prospect of procuring any in this hostile quarter. We therefore altered our course with the intention of going back to the friendly Indians for a supply, then, if thought proper and expedient, to return and prosecute our design of visiting part of the sea coast.

They re-  
turn for  
provisions.

When we had come opposite the hostile village on our way back, the same fellows who had annoyed us before, advanced again to attack us with a great noise which was echoed by those on shore. They approached so near that we were obliged to adopt a threatening attitude, and had to put them off with the muzzle of our guns. At last, perceiving our determination to be serious, their courage failed, they gave up the pursuit and crossed back to the village.

The tide was now in our favor, the evening was fine and we continued our course with great speed until eleven, when we encamped within six miles of the chief's village. The men being extremely tired went immediately to rest, but they were not long in bed before the tide washing upon the encampment roused them up.

Having been disturbed by the overflowing of the tide, we embarked early and arrived at the Chief's village at 5 A.M., where we found some of the Indians bathing, as it is their custom to bathe at this early hour; the others who were still asleep soon got up and received us at the water side, but all seemed surprised to see us again.

3rd, Mon-  
day.

About this time our Little Fellow, whom we had left at the village below, arrived and informed us that the Indians, after our departure, had fixed upon our destruction, that he himself

The In-  
dians de-  
termine on  
their des-  
truction.

had been pillaged, that his hands and feet had been tied, and that he was about being knocked on the head when the Chief of the Achinrow arrived, released him and secured his escape to this place, where he was now detained as a slave. This unpleasant recital served to warn us, more and more, of our danger; still we were bent upon obtaining sight of the main ocean, which was but at a short distance from where we had returned, but unfortunately we could not procure a morsel of provisions, and, besides, the Chief insisted upon having his canoe restored to him immediately; this demand we were obliged to resist.

The Chief invited us to his house and we went, but were not above five minutes absent when one of the men came running to inform us that the Indians had seized upon the canoe and were pillaging our people. Alarmed at this report, we hastened to their assistance, when we found that some of the Indians from below having arrived, had encouraged the others in these violent proceedings. Sensible by experience of our critical situation, and that mild measures would be improper, as well as of no service, I pretended to be in a violent passion, spoke loud, with vehement gestures, exactly in their own way, and thus peace and tranquility were instantly restored.

The expedition  
abandoned.

From these repeated specimens of the insolence and ill-nature of the Natives, we saw nothing but dangers and difficulties in our way, we therefore relinquished our designs and turned our thoughts towards home; but we could not proceed without the canoe and we had to force it away from the owner, leaving a blanket in its place. Thus provided, we pushed off. Here we missed one of our men, G. B.; the fellow being afraid had fled into the woods and placed himself behind a range of tombs, where he remained during the greatest part of the time. We stayed on shore, and it was with great difficulty we prevailed upon him to embark.

At last we got under way and had to pull hard against a strong current : Upon doubling the first point, the Chief, with a number of canoes in his *suite* well manned and armed, overtook us, and kept together, signing and exhibiting unfriendly manners. Aware of their design, we endeavored to keep them at a proper distance for some time ; at last, growing outrageous at our precautions, they began to surround us and close in, with the evident intention of seizing upon our canoe and upsetting us. I again had recourse to threats and vehemence of speech and gesture, which again had the desired effect ; the Chief, seeing danger in his design, spoke to his party and they all dropped quietly behind, but still followed and kept us in view. Soon after, a canoe with three men from a river on the left shore came to examine us ; after satisfying their curiosity, they returned. We observed that one of the crew had a large belt suspended from his neck, garnished with locks of human hair. About dark, we observed the war party gain the shore, but we continued all night in order to get to the next village, so as to secure provisions before their arrival. The night was dark and the current strong, yet we reached our destination about 8 in the morning.

Here I must again acknowledge my great disappointment in not seeing the *main Ocean*, having gone so near it as to be almost within view ; we besides wished very much to settle the situation by an observation for the longitude. The latitude is  $49^{\circ}$  nearly, while that of the entrance of the Columbia is  $46^{\circ} 20'$ . This river therefore is not the Columbia ! If I had been convinced of this when I left my canoes, I would certainly have returned.

The people of the village were greatly surprised to see us return and enquired with impatience if we had been to the island, and how we had the good fortune to escape from the

It is not  
the Colum-  
bia?  
4th, Tues-  
day.

Still pursued by the Coast Indians.

cruelty of the Masquiamme (1), meaning the nations at the sea shore. While we were endeavouring to answer, our pursuers of the day before made their appearance, still bent upon mischief. The leader on landing, began to testify his hostile disposition by brandishing his horn club and making a violent harangue to the people of the village who already seemed altogether in his favor. He claimed his canoe; seeing a number of canoes scattered about the beach, and wishing to get rid of so troublesome and persevering a persecutor, we consented without hesitation. After fixing the baggage and placing guards over it, at the request of a chief, Mr. Stuart, Mr. Quesnel and myself accompanied him to his tent, and were offered with salmon. We were much flattered with this token of his kindness but we were hardly seated and had hardly begun to partake of his bounty, when one of the men came rushing to the door exclaiming that the Indians were unruly and proceeding to violence; we rushed out of the tent, and at our appearance all was quiet again, but we could not feel free of some alarm seeing the whole village assembled around our baggage, armed with all kinds of weapons and seemingly determined upon mischief.

It was then that our situation might be really considered as critical. Placed upon a small sandy island, few in number, without provisions and surrounded by upward of seven hundred barbarians! Our resolution did not, however, forsake us; on the contrary, all were of one mind, ready for action and determined to make our way good at all hazards.

We applied for canoes in all directions, but could not procure any, for any consideration, so that we had to regret the inadvertancy we committed on our arrival by parting with the one we had in our possession, before it was replaced by another. There being no alternative, we again had recourse to the Chief

(1) Mr. Fraser writes the name, both "Misquiamme" and "Masquiamme".

notwithstanding our experience of his former illiberality. He asked his price, I consented; he augmented his demand, I again yielded; he still continued to increase his imposition, but, at length, feeling highly provoked at the impertinence of his conduct, I exclaimed violently in a manner not to be mistaken, he then ordered the canoe to be brought to our party.

We immediately prepared to embark, but when we began to load, the Indians crowded about the baggage and attempted to pillage, but so soon as they laid hold of any of our things, we pulled it from them, and we had to place ourselves in a position of defence and threaten them with the contents of our pieces before they desisted. Having got ready, we crossed over the river. One of the Indians who evinced a friendly disposition in our favor, followed and gave us some fish, at the same time, we observed several of the others embarking and steering their course parallel to ours along the other bank. The canoe, being leaky, and some of the men being in want of paddles, we were obliged to put ashore to repair. This done, we went on till ten P. M., when we encamped upon an island; the men went to rest, Mr. Stuart and I mounted guard alternately.

Started early, and at 10 A.M., we arrived at *Pulagli* village. <sup>5th, Wed-</sup>  
Here again we found the Chief of the big canoe with several <sup>nesday.</sup> of his people. Their canoes being small and consequently more easily managed than ours, which was large, gave them the advantage over us in stemming the current. As we had some reason to suspect that these Indians pressed forward on purpose to renew the quarrel and to be troublesome, and seeing the Natives more numerous here than in the last camp, we thought it advisable to avoid them by crossing to the other side of the river. Three men followed us in a canoe, who favoured us with a paddle and with five large salmons.

To convey an idea of the effects of our arms to these men, we fired several shots in their presence and then made them under-

stand that if the Chief should pursue us any further, he would suffer severely for his presumption. They desired us to proceed in peace and that no one would disturb us for the future.

We continued; about sunset two Indians in a canoe overtook us, we knew them; they invited us to their camp which was at a small distance on the opposite shore; this invitation we declined and at dark we put up for the night, all wet. The canoe was leaky, but the bank being steep, high, it could not be hauled up for repair. We passed the night within sight of the camp, yet none of the Indians came near us.

6th, Thurs-  
day.

Set out early; soon after several canoes joined; in these we recognized Blondin, the chief that flattered us so much the 29th June, also the two Indians of the preceding evening who gave us fish and who, of their own accord, assisted us in the rapids. Thinking them well disposed, I gave them permission to embark in our canoe; they paddled, but they were not long aboard before they struck up the war song. Perceiving their drift, I imposed silence; a moment after, Blondin got Mr. Quesnel's dagger out of the scabbard and was hiding it under his robe when he was perceived. Seeing their evil disposition, I had them instantly sent ashore. Soon after this, the other Indians made us signs to follow them, but, doubting their sincerity, we pushed from them into another channel and they doubled their speed.

By and by, we discovered a large camp of Indians whose appearance soon taught us that they were not assembled for any good purpose, and when we came opposite to them the whole were in motion. Some were in canoes, others lined the shore and all were inclining our way; at last it was with difficulty we could prevent them with the muzzle of our guns from seizing upon the canoe; they, however, continued to give us such a push with the intention of upsetting us, that our canoe became engaged in a strong current which, in spite of all our efforts, car-

ried us down the rapid. We however gained the shore at the foot of a high hill where we tied the canoe to a tree. Here I ordered Mr. Stuart with some of the men to debark and ascend the hill in order to keep the Indians in awe ; they, perceiving our preparation for defence, retired, but still kept ahead.

I then directed the men who were on shore to embark, but Mr. Stuart came to inform me that they were bent going by land across the mountains to the place where we had slept on the 24th of June. Considering this scheme as a desperate undertaking, I debarked and endeavoured to persuade the delinquents of their infatuation ; but two of them declared in their own names and in the names of the others that their plan was fixed, and that they saw no other way by which they could save themselves from immediate destruction than by flying out of the way of danger, for, said they, continuing by water, surrounded by hostile nations, who watched every opportunity to attack and torment them, created in their mind a state of suspicion worse than death. I remonstrated and threatened by turns, the other gentlemen joined me in my endeavours to expose the folly of their undertaking, and the advantages that would accrue to us all by remaining, as we had hitherto done, in perfect union for our common safety.

After much debate on both sides, they yielded and we all shook hands, resolved not to separate during the voyage, which resolution was immediately confirmed by the following oath taken on the spot by each of the party. " I solemnly swear before Almighty God that I shall sooner perish than forsake in distress any of our crew during the present voyage "

After this ceremony was over, all hands dressed in their best apparel and each took charge of his own bundle. In the mean time some of the peaceable Indians came to pay us a visit ; they inherited our superfluities, and it diverted us much to see them dive into the river and scramble about rags which the

Some of the  
men speak  
of desert-  
ing.

The oath of  
mutual as-  
sistance.



men had thrown away as useless. By this time it was near sunset: we however decamped full of spirits, singing and making a great noise. The Indians who were waiting ahead, observing us so cheerful, felt disheartened, kept their distance and some of them thought proper to paddle down the stream. At dusk, we encamped on a small island below a village. The two young Indians who had benefited by our scourgings encamped with us, but the others did not approach the island.

In the morning, the residue of the unfriendly Indians who had passed the night in the vicinity, directed their course down the current, and we saw nothing of them afterwards. Our Little Fellow and his chief who had slept at the village came over to see us; they informed us that all the people from below were gone. We crossed over to the village where we procured a few salmons and shell fish which were left there by the last visitors. The Indians were few in number and very poor. A couple of leagues further on we came to another village where we obtained a few fish.

By 10 A. M. we came to a portage where we had to carry most of our things and drag the canoe up with a line; a number of Indians were present, they appeared friendly and the old men entered into conversation with us. Our Little Fellow informed them of all he knew about us, he spoke particularly of our difficulties, how we resisted the attacks of the tribes below, and explained to them the nature of our big guns and also of our little guns, of which, said he, our pockets were full. As a proof, we fired several shots, at which they were astonished.

We renewed our course, some of our men were rather dull, the thoughts of approaching the Passage of the Rock probably annoyed them. Below the village of the Rock, we found some Indians fishing who invited us to the village; but we went to encamp on the opposite shore. While we were landing our Little Fellow made his appearance as an ambassador from the

people of the village, requesting our presence among them ; I, with Mr. Quesnel and six of the men, crossed over. The Indians received us with kindness, and we stayed with them a couple of hours when they ferried us back in small canoes. In the evening we observed the Indians fishing ; their nets, which resembled purses, were fixed to the end of long poles and dragged between two canoes.

All hands were ready early, but before the necessary arrangements were taken to prosecute our journey by land, it was past 8. We then crossed over to the village where we had embarked in canoes on the 29th. It being the end of the navigation, I made a present of the canoe and some little things we could not conveniently carry with us to our Little Fellow, which he immediately presented to his friends. Then each of us took charge of his own bundle and we marched into the village.

The Indians did not receive us with the same cordiality they did when we went down ; however, they set mats for us and put stones in the fire in order to prepare us a meal. This operation required more time than our situation would permit, and we took our leave, still prepared for the worst because we had dangerous places to pass, defiles in which a few men might defy an army with stones. Some of the Indians who assisted in carrying our things pilfered a kettle and my calumet, but they were restored by order of the Chief.

At about 11 A. M. we arrived at a village where we were kindly treated ; here we missed our kettle a second time, and our Little Fellow informed us that it was stolen. The Indians of the village were alarmed at this incident, thinking no doubt that we would ill use them in consequence ; we assured them that the custom of white people was to punish only those who had injured them, and that, if we could lay hold of the Indian who had taken it, he should have reason to regret his rapacity ;

they seemed satisfied at this explanation. I made a few presents to those from whom we experienced friendship.

The friendly  
Hacamaugh's.

On examining our little baggage, we discovered that two or three other articles were missing, which had been taken by the Indians to whom we had entrusted the baggage at the Rock; this was a lesson not to be forgotten during the remainder of the journey. Soon after our departure at the end of the carrying place, we met two chiefs in two canoes from the Hacamaugh nation. They did not expect us, but they were so happy at our return that they lent us their canoes, while they themselves went on foot to the village. These Indians showed us every possible mark of kindness; having taken up our quarters with them for the night, they gave us plenty to eat and entertained us with a variety of songs, dances, &c., during the evening.

9th. Sunday.

This being a fine morning, we dried our things and at 1 P.M. took our departure. Some of the Indians who accompanied us offered to carry part of our baggage, we thanked them for their kindness, but would not trust our things out of our sight. The chief of the next village, having heard of our approach, sent two canoes to meet us, in which we embarked. The Indians gave us two excellent-dogs, which made delicious meals for the men, besides fish and berries in abundance. Here we procured a few articles of curiosity, viz: a blanket of dogs' hair, a matted bag, a wooden comb of curious construction, &c. We observed here a variety of tools, pieces of iron and brass, a bunch of brass keys from the crews of a ship which the Indians of the sea had destroyed several years before.

10th, Monday.

Set out early; kept the left side of the river accompanied by several Indians who showed us the way. The road was excessively bad; we had to pass many difficult rocks, defiles, precipices through which there was a kind of beaten path practised by the Natives and made passable by means of scaffolds, bridges and ladders so peculiarly constructed that it required no small

degree of necessity, dexterity and courage in strangers to undertake. For instance, we had to ascend precipices by means of ladders composed of two long poles placed upright with sticks tied cross ways with twigs; upon the end of these, others were placed and so on to any height; add to this that the ladders were often so slack, that the smallest breeze put them in motion, swinging them against the rocks, while the steps leading from scaffold to scaffold were so narrow and irregular that they could scarcely be traced by the feet without the greatest care and circumspection; but the most perilous part was when another rock projected over the one we were clearing.

The Indians certainly deserve our grateful remembrance for their able assistance throughout these alarming situations. The descents were, if possible, still more difficult; in these places, we were under the necessity of trusting our things to the Indians, even our guns were handed from one to another, yet they thought nothing of it, they went up and down these wild places with the same agility as sailors do on board a ship. After escaping innumerable perils in the course of the day, we encamped about sunset; the Indians tried to fish but caught nothing; they however supplied us with plenty of dried fish.

Early this morning, we continued our route with the Little Fellow and another Indian; crossed a rapid river upon a bridge and soon after got to the end of the Portage, where we found three canoes in which those who were lame embarked; the others continued by land. Some of the Natives from below overtook us and, in the afternoon, we arrived at the village where we slept the 24th June; the Indians were happy to see us again, and favoured us with plenty of provisions. I wished to go on without delay, but our Little Fellow, aided by the people of the village, insisted on our passing the night with them.

11th, Tues-  
day.

12th, Wed-  
nesday.

This morning after procuring a sufficiency of fish we set out; two canoes having followed, such of our people as were indisposed to walk, embarked in them, the others who went by land had now and then to make use of the canoes as ferry boats in crossing rivers.

At the carrying place where the canoes were left, Mr. Quesnel lost his way and was some time absent; several men and Indians went in search of him, but he found his way to the village without their assistance. The weather was exceedingly hot, and the road extremely bad all day.

13th,  
Thursday.

Started early accompanied by many Indians as usual. Previous to our departure the Chief gave us forty salmons and sent young men along with us to carry them saying: "The Indians above are poor"; I returned the chief's compliment to his satisfaction. We could not procure canoes, the Indians said the rapids were too strong to make use of them to any advantage. Soon after we had left the camp, the Indian who had supplied us with a canoe going down joined our party and offered his services again in like manner, which we accepted and found useful for many purposes in course of the day.

We passed the village where the Indians were so poor according to the account of the chief, yet they generously shared with us what little they had. Foul weather,—we were wet to the skin; the men being in bad humour, some of them would not approach the camp, such conduct under the circumstances was very unpleasant

14th, Fri-  
day.

Lost some time waiting for the men who had thought proper to remain behind; it was six o'clock before they joined the party and I reprimanded them, but they blamed the weather. At 8, we found ourselves at the head of the rapid where we escaped perishing on the 20th June (1), an Indian camp on the opposite

(1) Evidently an error, he meant 21st. Near Fargo Bar, where gold was first discovered. Mayne. "Four years in British Columbia".

side invited us over; we went. Here we found two of the guides we had employed on our way down, and the Indians, of their own accord, restored us a hat, a pair of shoes and some other articles we had lost in the rapids.

At 2 P.M., we arrived at the confluence or Forks of the Thompson River: two of our men who were behind came up with us with some Natives. Having been invited we visited a camp which was on an elevated ground and where we found Indians from the interior. These Indians have a warlike appearance; they crowded around us and gazed on us with astonishment. They were called *Swhanemugh* and spoke a different language from the tribes in the vicinity. They dress finely in leather, and we understood that their country was well stocked with animals, such as horses, deer, beaver &c. They gave us plenty of fresh salmon, berries and roots.

The Swhanemugh Indians.

Three or four children who were unwell were brought to me by their parents for medical assistance, and as I did not think fit to disappoint them, I sent one of the gentlemen for a vial of Turlington, but he brought laudanum; considering however the one of equal virtue with the other towards a cure, I mixed a few drops of what he brought with water, in this mixture I dipped my finger which I gently applied to the forehead of the sick. Believing no doubts in miracles, there were upwards of four score of applicants for a touch of my finger, and had we remained any length of time, I have reason to believe that the whole camp, which exceeded twelve hundred, would have followed the example. Most of the children were really afflicted with some serious disorder which reduced them to skeletons. The women of this tribe had the neatest dress of any we have seen in this quarter.

The Chief of the Hacamaughs, who had been so serviceable to us in going down, was here, but took no notice of us; this inattention made us suspect his former sincerity. However, the

Starving Indians.

other Indians appeared well disposed towards us; they presented me with an otter belt and lent us their canoes to cross the river, still we could perceive something unpleasant in their demeanour; it is true they had been waiting our arrival for a long time and were then actually starving; they had been killing their horses, and we saw the hide of one quite fresh hanging upon a tree. This degree of ~~famine~~ perhaps caused the disagreeable gloom which so forcibly attracted our notice.

After leaving these Indians, we continued for the rest of the day until we came opposite a village to which we crossed and where we found the people poor but civil; they regaled us with dog flesh.

16th, Sun-  
day.

This day we passed several camps of Indians; the weather being wet and bad, we encamped early with a band whose chief made me a present of a coat of mail to make shoes, as we were much in want of this article; our feet were covered with blisters from our continually walking on the worst of roads, and some of the men, who were lame, were in perpetual torture.

17th, Mon-  
day.

I procured this morning several curiosities and satisfied the Chief for his present of the preceding night. We went off and breakfasted at a place where, on the 15th June, I gave medicine to a sick man who was still there and unwell. About noon we came to the fort of the Askettih tribes, where the old Atnah chief and our interpreter left us our way down. The Indians received us kindly and requested we should wait the return of their chief who had gone to another camp. To this we agreed, and, about two hours after, the Chief made his appearance accompanied with a numerous suite. He delivered a long and loud speech to which he added the acceptable present of a few coats of mail. He then pressed us to go with him to the other camp; this invitation we had reason to decline; we, however, crossed the river and encamped directly opposite the place which he wanted us to visit.

The Indians immediately sent canoes for us and some of our people went. The camp consisted of upwards one thousand persons with the whole of whom I had to shake hands, as they were strangers. The Chief made a harangue and then invited us to his shade where we were treated with great hospitality. At this place, an Indian who was labouring under some disease offered me a pair of shoes in hopes of obtaining some relief. When we returned to our encampment, we learned that the Indians during our absence had made several trips across the river with invitations to the rest of our party to go and join them.

This morning at the earnest request of the Indians, Mr. Stuart <sup>15th Tues-</sup> and such of the men as wished it paid a visit to the camp. Mr. Stuart procured many curiosities, and the men brought back ~~some dogs, which, to their palates, proved a delicious dish.~~ <sub>day.</sub>

A woman who had followed our party for these three days past, was left last night at the camp, but she found means to come and join us again, and was the only Native, from this quarter, in our suite during this day. The country being extremely rough and the paths numerous we could not keep together, consequently, we lost some time waiting for those who had deviated from the right path. We encamped near a village which our Little Fellow went immediately to visit; on his return he informed us that the greatest portion of the *cache* which we <sup>Loss of a</sup> had left there had been destroyed by wild animals, and that for <sub>cache.</sub> the remainder we were under obligations to the Indians who had secured it for our return.

The report of the diminution of our cache caused a gloominess <sup>19th Wed-</sup> among the men. Being afraid of starving, some of them went <sub>nesday.</sub> so far as to insinuate a wish of remaining with the Natives, and one of them dropped behind, visibly with that intention, but seeing that none of the others followed his example, he doubled his pace and in a short time overtook us. About this time we met two of the Atnah nation who were on their way to the Askettih country, and who, returning with us, gave us some



useful informations. At sunset, we found ourselves at the foot of the Rock which gave us so much trouble coming down. Here several Natives joined us and informed us that many more were passing upon the hills. Although there might be no danger I thought it more advisable to run no unnecessary risk, I therefore despatched Mr. Quesnel and two men, by way of precaution, to our canoes which were about three miles distant.

20th  
Thursday

Early in the morning, we proceeded on our journey and soon after joined Mr. Stuart, when we had the inexpressible satisfaction of finding our canoes and our *cache* perfectly safe. For this good fortune we felt grateful to the Indians who continually attended to their security during our absence. We lost no time, but set about preparing the canoes for the voyage; having no materials on hand, one of the canoes, although good, was cut up to repair the other two. While we were employed upon this service, number of the Natives called to see us and passed on to the other stages; our Little Fellow and the two Atnahs accompanied them.

At 3 P. M., all being ready, we took our departure; safe in our canoes, we had reason to consider ourselves once more at home, and notwithstanding the many trying moments which we had experienced, we talked of the past as of nothing and felt happy; —encamped at dark.

21st, Fri-  
day.

Set out early.—We had to oppose a strong current and encounter great difficulties in the rapid; bad weather and rain rendered our situation still more unpleasant. While we were busy in one of the carrying places, several Natives on horseback paid us a visit, and retired in succession as their curiosity was satisfied. We encamped about dark.

22nd, Sa-  
turday.

We were off early; still a strong current and many rapids; the waters having greatly abated we had more carrying places than before. At 8 A.M., we arrived at the *rapide covert* which is more than a mile long and where we were obliged to carry all our baggage over long and steep hills; here we found

The friend-  
ly Atnahs  
of *Rapide  
Covert*.

Indians among whom were the old Atnah chief and his brother, both so overjoyed to see us that they annoyed us with caresses. They assured us that they felt extremely anxious for our safety during our absence, and that they had determined, if the Indians of the sea destroyed us, to collect their friends and go to revenge us. We could not take these professions for Gospel, we however thanked the chief for his friendship and good intentions, at the same time I wished to make him and his friends understand that we were not to be easily destroyed, as our nature and our arms were superior to any thing we could meet among Indians. When the portage was done we crossed over to the Indian camp. The chief and his brother embarked and crossed with us, the others made use of a small canoe constructed of pine bark and curiously formed, being narrow at both the ends which pointed downwards in the shape of a funnel. The men described it, "*un canot à bec d'éturgeon*"; it could carry no more than two at a time.

The Indians of the camp received us with loud acclamations and made us numerous presents in leather. Our Little Fellow remained at this camp; he would have accompanied us to the end of the voyage, but the Indians advised him to go and find his friends. I made him a present of some necessary articles such as pleased him most. The woman also remained, it being also the wish of the chief. We continued our route and encamped late.

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Arrived early at Chilkoetin River, and found the Old Chief there; he came the night before from the *rapide covert* and rode through the plains beyond the hills which line the water communication. About two hundred Natives from every quarter were assembled at this place to have a peep at us *en passant*. They wished us to delay our departure until their friends who

were on their way to the camp should arrive, this wish we could not satisfy. The Indians, however, gave us a plentiful feast made up of venison, onions, roots, &c.; they also made us a present of some leather and beaver skins. After making a suitable acknowledgment for these obligations, we took our departure. The Old Chief, with several others in his suite, continued by land to the next stage. At *Portage du baril*, the Indians assisted in passing over our baggage, which was of great service to us, the portage being long and the weather extremely hot. In course of the afternoon we shot a deer on the beach and encamped soon after.

26th Wednesday.

The Chilkotins.

Proceeded on as usual;—had rain and bad weather; got to *Portage la Truite* in the afternoon where we encamped. Here again we found the Old Chief with a large assembly of Atnahs and Chilkotins; the latter are from the westward and came on purpose to have a sight of us, having never seen white men before. They had information of our return from the lower parts of the river by messages across the country.

The Chilkotins, who are a tribe of the Carriers and whom we could understand without the assistance of an interpreter, are from the head of the Chilkotin River. They speak of their country as plentifully stocked with all kind of animals which are common to the North-West; they seem to be acquainted with Christian goods and are, if I am not mistaken, of a bold, roguish disposition.

27th, Thursday.

Indian honesty and generosity.

We had to ascend some very difficult and dangerous rapids particularly the one where we were nearly lost the 1st of June. Here again one of our canoes narrowly escaped; while hauling it up among steep banks and strong cascades, it filled, and all our things got wet. At the end of the carrying place of this rapid, we found our *cache* of provisions and canoes in the same good order as we left them. After supplying ourselves plentifully, I made over the remainder to the Indian who had it in charge; he immediately divided the same among his friends who were

greatly in want: Having been in a state of starvation for some time previous to our arrival, they deserve much credit for having abstained from the *cache*. The things which got wet were spread in the sun, but before they were thoroughly dry we embarked and crossed to the opposite bank: here we found a dipping net with which one of our young men tried his skill in fishing, but without success.

We had to oppose a strong current which greatly fatigued the men. Early in the afternoon, we arrived at the village of the Old Chief; he got before us as usual by land. Here ends the rocky country, all the portages and bad places being passed, we had now but plain sailing for the rest of the voyage. The chief's brother delivered to us four bales of fish which he had in charge and, this being the last village of the Atnah nation, he did not follow us any farther. Having experienced from him kind attention and much service, I presented him with a gun, some ammunition and some other necessary articles and gave his brother a dagger.

This morning, after repairing the canoes, we took our leave of the Indians at 6. The Atnahs are good people, they expressed their regret at our departure, and begged that we would return to their country as soon as possible in order to reside among them as traders. This, I in a manner promised. We went on tolerably well for some time notwithstanding the current we had to oppose. We passed several houses and fisheries and, in the afternoon, came to the place where we saw the first Indians and where we lost our swivel on the 30th May. Here we found a band of Tahowtins who received us with kindness, they had furs but were loathe to part with them. These Indians procure their necessaries from the westward and seem to be well supplied with iron utensils.

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(1) Near Soda Creek.

Salmon  
barriers.

They gave us plenty of salmon which they take in abundance by means of barriers. These barriers form a work of some ingenuity and are constructed in the following manner. Strong posts are driven into the ground at certain distances, and these distances are filled with frames made of splinters placed so close that a fish cannot pass between. On the top of these, are squared beams for the purpose of walking, and underneath are placed props to support the whole against the force of the current. At one end is the gate, and sometimes there are gates in the center which receive the contrivance which confines the fish. This contrivance is shaped like cask and composed of splinters the size of a finger and several feet long, and secured by watap hoops. The end that is placed below in the current is made inside like a funnel, through which the fish enter, one by one, and cannot find the way back, but must remain as in a net.

This country is mountainous and poor; the Natives generally live on fish, of which they lay by in the summer a sufficiency for the winter. A few, indeed, take animals in snares and, when the crust of the snow is strong, they run down the deer with dogs, but this is a general custom among Indians.

30th, Sun-  
day.

Previous to our arrival at this place, two of the Indians had a serious quarrel; the one stabbed the other with a lance which left a bad wound. We set out at 5; discovered that one of our *caches* was destroyed, but the contents were only one bale of fish. We observed an Indian in a small canoe who wished to avoid us, and we had some difficulty to approach him. However, with a little coaxing, we prevailed upon him to leave his own canoe and to embark in ours. We wanted him in order to introduce us to a camp of his friend who were at some distance.

When we came near the camp we sent him ashore to notify them of our approach. We found in this camp several families of the Nasquitin Nation. The men received us at the water side, armed; being strangers they were in doubts as to our intentions, but, after having been informed of our character, they laid by

their weapons and treated us with confidence. Soon after, several more made their appearance from all directions and haranguing as they came. They had some furs for which they asked a high price. A kind of white shell found along the sea shore forms the principal medium of exchange among all the Indians to the west of the Rocky Mountains. This article is to them what money is to us.

Passed several camps of Indians in the course of the day; at sunset, approaching a camp to put ashore, the Indians flew to their arms, put on their coats of mail and appeared as mad as furies; however, on receiving proper explanations, they altered their tone and received us with kindness.

Set out early, debarked at Quesnel's river, where we found some of the Natives, from whom we procured some furs, plenty of fish and berries—continued our route until sunset.

August  
1st, Tues-  
day.  
Quesnel  
River.

Early in the water, arrived at the Mountain Portage,—some difficulty in the rapid—found our cache safe,—continued and encamped on the left of the River.

2nd, Wed-  
nesday.

Set out early as usual;—found a family of Indians busily employed fishing; they gave us as much salmon as we wished. In course of the day, we passed several houses. At one of the camps where we put ashore, the chief, who was considered a great man, offered us two bear skins in exchange for other articles, and some of his people followed us to his encampment.

3rd, Thurs-  
day.

A boy who was a relation to our young men, embarked with us in order to visit his friend—proceeded on till night.

4th, Fri-  
day.

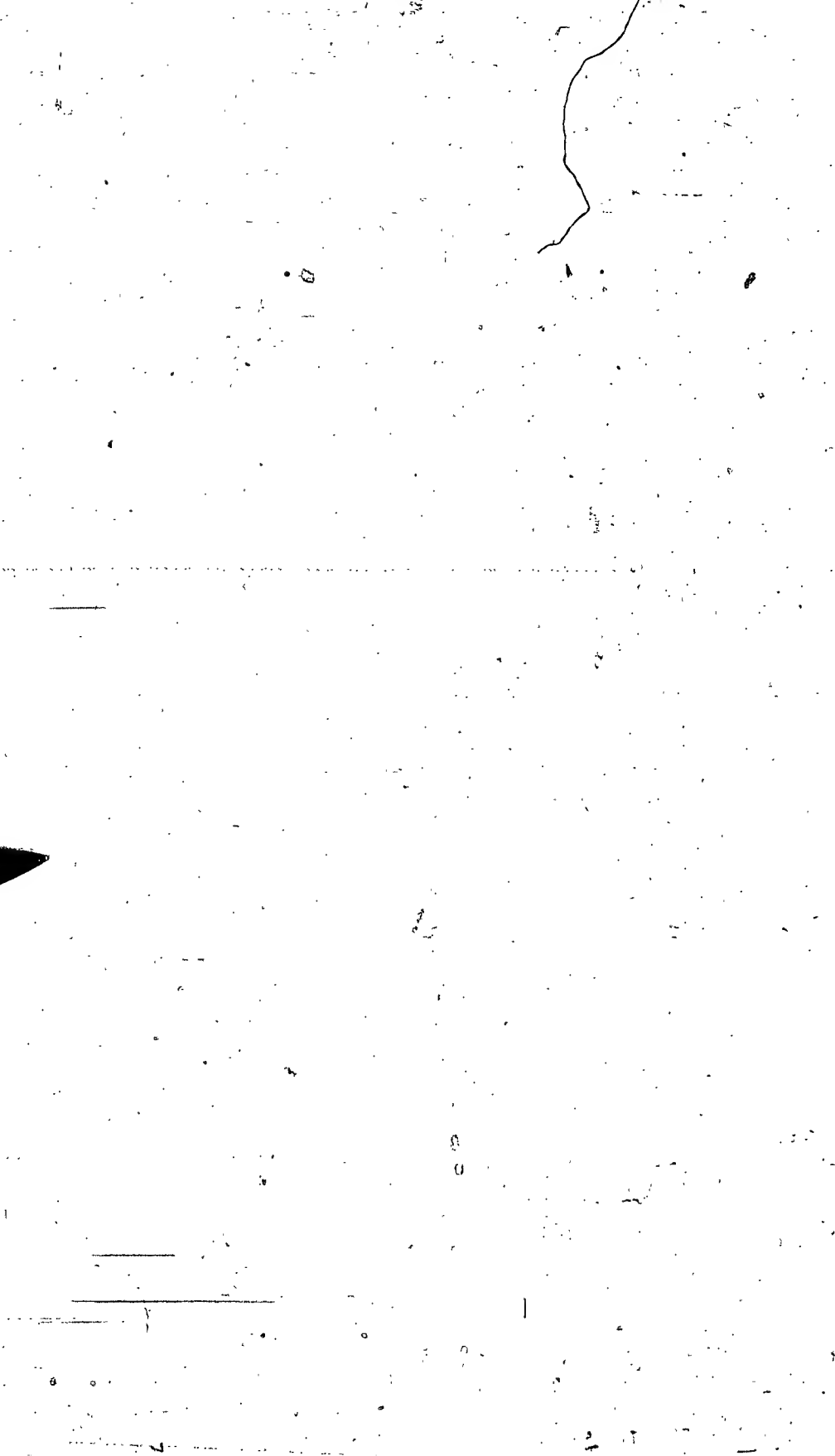
Set out at an early hour. Passed a portage and several rapids and encamped upon the right bank. The men found a large fungus which had grown upon a hemlock tree; it has the same virtue as rhubarb, and the Natives use it to dress or whiten their leather.

5th, Satur-  
day.

Set out early, and at noon arrived at the Fort where we found Mr. Faries with his two men.

6th, Sun-  
day.

END.



MR JOHN M<sup>C</sup>DONNELL

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SOME ACCOUNT

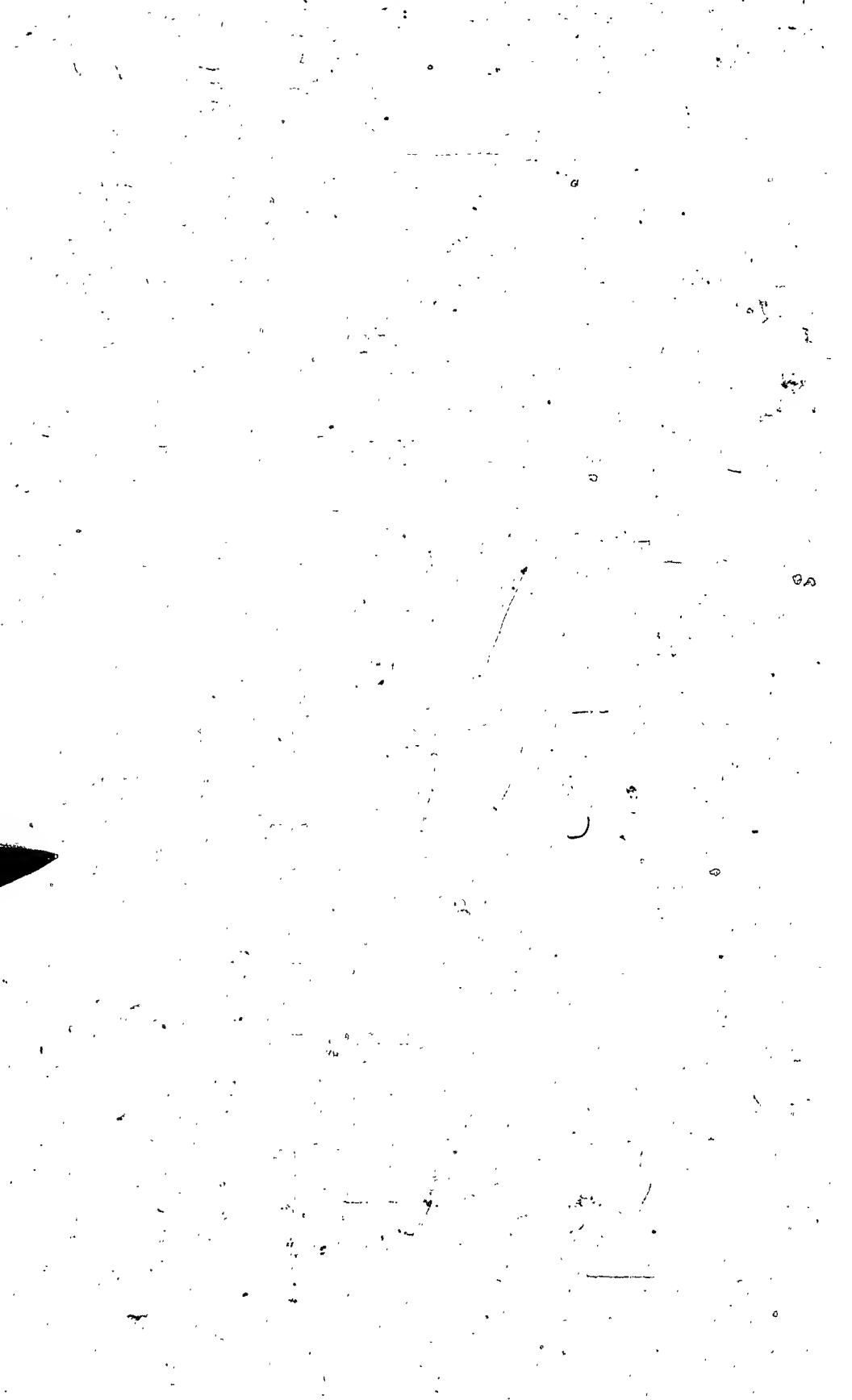
OF THE

RED RIVER

(ABOUT 1797)

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL  
1793-1795





# THE RED RIVER

BY

JOHN M<sup>c</sup>DONNELL (1)

OF THE NORTH-WEST COMPANY

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After leaving the North-West Company's Fort at the entrance of river Ouinipique, we have nearly eighteen leagues of the lake of the name to coast along before coming to the entrance of the Red River.

This river enters Lake Ouinipique at its south-east corner by three different channels; the middle channel is the deepest and most practicable, the others are choked up by sand at their entrance into the Lake. It is lined with very tall reeds, the wood being only discernible at a distance. This middle branch is the road of all canoes, &c., that enter the river. All the branches join a league above the entrance, and, two leagues

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(1) Mr. John McDonnell was a brother of Mr. Miles McDonnell, the first governor of Lord Selkirk's Red River Colony. He became a Partner of the North-West Company about 1796, and remained in the North-West till 1815. He then sold his share and settled at *Pointe Fortune*, in the township of Hawkesbury, where he kept a store and ran boats to Montreal.

Mr. McDonnell died at *Pointe Fortune*, leaving several children, who all died without issue, and he was buried in the Catholic cemetery of Bigaud. Mr. W. J. McDonnell, vice consul of France in Toronto, is his nephew.

higher, the banks—though still very low—begin to be covered with wood.

*Rivière  
aux morts.*

Three leagues from the lake, the River *aux morts* enters the Red River on the north side. Here a large camp of Assiniboils, Crees and Sauteux were massacred by the Sioux or *Naudawesis*, the most powerful nation in all the interior country. Ever since this slaughter, the river has been called with propriety, *Rivière aux morts*.

*Fort à M.  
Frobisher.*

Two or three leagues above *Rivière aux morts* is a clear spot on which Mr. Joseph Frobisher is said to have passed a winter, and is called, *Fort à M. Frobisher*.

The first rapid we came to is the *Sault à la Biche*, about three leagues above Mr. Frobisher's Fort and three leagues long. At low water it is a great obstacle to navigation, but at other times the men push up the canoes with setting poles.

Near the head of *Sault à la Biche*, the plains extend to the very brink of the river, but only in small openings of an acre and a half; the grass and other weeds are so tall, owing to the moisture of the soil, that it is very disagreeable walking. There is always plenty of water from the *Sault à la Biche* to the Forks, reckoned six leagues.

The Forks.

At the Forks, the remains of several old posts are still to be seen, some of which were built as far back as the time of the French Government. This place, as well as the *Rivière aux Morts*, is a favorite Indian encampment. On these plains we generally find some straggling Sauteux or *Pilleurs* from Lake Rouge, who generally have provisions to barter for liquor, *en passant*.

Here we leave the Red and enter the Assiniboil River, the smaller branch of the two, which is very shoal, full of sand banks, and one of the most crooked that fancy can conceive. A man on foot, who marches straight through the plains, in three hours time can go as far as the canoes in a day.

The Red River, properly so called, takes its waters near the Mississippi, and by it the southern traders from *La Prairie du Chien* enter the Assiniboil; but it is a long way about and very precarious, as they are forced to come thro' the territories of the Sioux, the most savage and barbarous nation of the Plain Indians. This road is called *passer par l'aile du Corbeau*, after a portage of that name. The Red River route.

The country all along the banks of the Red River, and a considerable distance from them on each side, is very little frequented, except by war parties, it being a warlike route between the Sauteux and their enemies the Sioux, who are ever at variance.

From the Forks of the Assiniboil and Red rivers, the plains The Plains. are quite near the banks, and so extensive that a man may travel from here to *Fort des Prairies*, Rocky Mountain, Missouri, Mississippi and many other places without passing a wood a mile long. All the wood here, as in the rest of the plains, being only small tufts, here and there, called by the French, *Flôts de bois*, surrounded by the plains the same as an island is encompassed by water, and slips that grow on the richest lands, on low points near the river and on its banks.

Half a day's march for the canoes higher than the Forks, is Buffalo Ford. the passage so called from being a good fording place and the first we meet of the "buffalo fords." Here we often meet the first buffalo, being generally some straggling bulls, and we can get here in three days from the entrance of the river into Lake Quinipique.

Besides the buffalo, we have another resource in the fish Fish. that abound in this little river; we take care to furnish the canoes with fishing tackling on that account. The sturgeon of this river is esteemed the best in the North-West, but they are only caught in small drawing nets of two fathoms long, and chiefly in the spring of the year. The fish we catch with the line are :

the *barbue* or cat-fish, *poisson doré*, pike, and *lacépêche*, a small species of white fish, well known in the St. Lawrence about Montreal, and so common here that I have seen them catch 30 or 40 per man while smoking their pipes.

Old trading Posts.

All along the Assiniboil River may be seen the vestiges of many commercial settlements, several of which claim an ancient date. Blondishe's Fort is the first we come to. Next to it, *Fort la Reine*, according to some, but others say *Fort la Reine*, stood at the *Portage La Prairie*. After coming to Adhemar's Fort we got to the *Portage La Prairie* in a day,—that is the canoe—by land the distance does not exceed six miles.

Portage la Prairie.

*Portage la Prairie*, so called by the Indians timé out of mind, is about eight days march by water from the mouth of the river. Across this portage, which is about twelve miles over, the *Fort Dauphin* goods used to be carried under the French *commandants* to Lake Manitou-Ban and from thence to River *Dauphine*.

At this place, Mr. William McKay, on behalf of the North-West Company, passed the winter of 1794-1795 and had Mr. Réaume, Dejadon, for Laviolette and Mr. Linkwater for the Hon. H. B. Company to cope with, and against a superior quantity of merchandise he still made good returns.

Fort des Trembles.

Three leagues above *Portage La-Prairie* stood *Le Fort des Trembles*, or Poplar Fort. In the year 1780 or 1781, the Indians made an attempt to pillage the traders, Messrs. Bruce and Boyer, and, in the scuffle that ensued, two Frenchmen and seven Indians were killed upon the spot. Owing to this affair, the traders were obliged, for fear of being cut off, to reembark their canoes and return to winter at the Forks. The small pox seizing the Natives and sweeping off three fourths of them, compelled them to lay aside their intention of cutting off all the white men in the interior country.

Above *Fort des Trembles* is a wood, called *La Grande Tremblière*, which stretches a considerable distance into the plains, so that

the common road is through the center of it. This wood is about three leagues long but may be avoided by striking out through the plains at *Portage La Prairie*. Above the *Grande Tremblière*, the soil changes suddenly; the lower parts, from the River *aux Morts* to the extremity of the *Grande Tremblière*, being generally a good soil, susceptible of culture and capable of bearing rich crops, whereas, above it, the soil has attained such a mixture of yellow sand, that it is, in some places, covered with grass which seldom exceeds ankle height and covering the ground but very sparingly.

The Pine Fort, the lowest post the North-West Company had in the Assiniboil River, we were obliged to abandon in the year 1794, as the Honorable Hudson Bay Company and other new comers had settled the year before at River *La Souris*, about seven leagues by land higher up the river, and three days traveling for the craft by water, the posts being too near, as we had placed ourselves alongside of the others at the above mentioned new station.

It is sometimes commanded to the summer men to meet the canoes at any place above the *Grande Tremblière* with provision and on horseback, and, if such a step be necessary, an express is hurried off overland from any place above the Forks to give them warning. The Bourgeois go always up by land from the place they first meet the horses, and generally from the *Rivière du Milieu*, horses or not. The river *du Milieu* is ten leagues below Pine Fort.

The face of the country from the *Grande Tremblière* to the westernmost end of the *Montagne du Diable* is very poor and barren, and the soil mostly yellow sand, all broken into little hillocks, separated from one another by as many little glens, but at the *Montagne du Diable*, which commences at the Pine Fort and continues nearly two leagues to the westward, the

country becomes one great plain to the head of the Assiniboil River and even to Fort George and the Rocky Mountain.

The trade. The Indians who trade at the River *La Souris* are a mixture of all nations in the Assiniboil River, though the Krees are the most numerous. The others are: the roving *Sauteux*, who are some times here, some times at Fort Dauphin, some times at *Lac du Manitou-Ban* and other places, wherever fancy leads them, and Assiniboils, the same as at *Fort des Prairies*, but much more indolent than those who are to be met within the River *du Pas* (1).

From River *La Souris*, the trade with the Mandans and *Gros Ventres*, inhabiting both sides of the Missouri, has been carried on since Pine Fort was abandoned. This trade was carried on by the men taking upon credit a certain number of skins, as suited their circumstances, at the price of the post and paying at their return. Many of the Company's servants deserting from the Mandan country with an intention of going to the Illinois and other places on the Mississippi, the trade has since been entirely neglected.

The distance of the Mandan village, upon the Missouri, from our factory at River *La Souris* is ten or twelve days' march in winter, and supposed to be one hundred leagues due south of this place. In going to the Mandan country, the people are sometimes obliged to sleep without any wood, and, in such cases, experience has taught them to make fires of buffalo dung dried in the sun—after the Indian manner—of which there is always plenty to be had, which shows the vast numbers of those animals that frequent the plains. There is so little snow at the Missouri that the Natives run down the buffalos on horseback the whole winter through.

The Mandans.

These Indians live in settled villages, fortified with palisades, which they seldom ever abandon, and they are the best hus-

(1) North Saskatchewan.

bandmen in the whole North-West. They raise indian corn or maize, beans, pumpkins, squashes in considerable quantity, not only sufficient to supply their own wants, with the help of the buffalo, but also to sell and give away to all strangers that enter their villages. They are the mildest and most honest Indians upon the whole continent and, withal, very fond of the white people.

They report that the Missouri, from their settlements to the Rocky Mountain, is not obstructed with a single waterfall; and French travellers from the Illinois and *Pincourt* affirm that it is one continued series of smooth current till its junction with the Mississippi, near the latter place. The Missouri Indians say its only fall is down the eastern side of the ridge of hills, called the Rocky Mountain, which they describe as very high, so much so, that they cross the river under the sheet of water without its coming near them. They suppose it takes its waters near the summit of the Rocky Mountain. The Mandan village, on the Missouri, by Mr. Evans Chart, is 460 leagues distant from the Illinois.

The Missouri.

But, to return to the Assiniboil River; it is very shallow and full of rapids for a day and a half's voyage for the canoes to the *Barrière*, about five leagues over land from the posts at River *la Souris*, but after that, they go on well till they come to the sand banks beyond Mountain *La Bosse*.

The Assiniboine River.

Near a league above the *Barrière*, on each side of the river, begins a ridge of hills about the distance of a mile; the summit of these ridges is only level with the rest of the plain country above, forming a deep vale between them, at the bottom of which runs the Assiniboil River, which keeps a continual winding course from one side to the other of the hills, called by the French, *Grandes Côtes*.

Those who go up by land, owing to the continual windings of the river, have plenty of time to hunt buffalo, moose deer,



caberie (?) and fowls of all kinds which abound in this country, and at the same time keep up with the canoes. The country is so plentiful that the canoes have always either fresh meat or fowls for their kettles.

The country here is, as below, one large plain, interspersed with small islands of wood here and there, but the low points of land near the water are frequently shaded with groves of venerable oaks and elms. The soil of the plains is a mixture of sand, clay, gravel and stones in many places, but the glen wherein the river runs is a mixture of clay and black mould.

The Mountain *à la Bossé*, the nearest post to the North-West Company's settlement at River *La Souris*, and distant from it six days voyage for the canoes and two days for the foot men through the plains, has been frequently established and as often abandoned, owing to the oppositions that come into that quarter, as these gentlemen, when by themselves, establish as few posts as they conveniently can, in order to save property. On the contrary, when incommoded by new comers, they subdivide and divert the trade into as many little channels as they have men and clerks to occupy, well knowing that their opponents, who have but few goods generally, cannot oppose them at every place.

This post turned out about sixty packs, at an average, for the North-West Company, exclusive of opposition trade, but the returns from it are mostly wolves and buffalo robes.

Fort Espérance.

Six days' march from *Montagne à la Bosse*, the River *qui appelle* (1) enters the Assiniboil River, and on it, about two short days' march in canoes further up, is *Fort Espérance* which has been settled these ten years past and was chiefly Mr. Robert Grant's residence while he superintended the Red River affair and has

(1) In olden times, the shores of this river were haunted by a spirit, whose voice, resembling that of a human being, was often heard wailing during the night. So said the Natives, and the *Voyageurs* called it *Rivière qui Appelle*.

always been inhabited, summer and winter, ever since. It is at this post and *Montagne à la Bosse* that most of the Red River provisions have been procured, being, both, Assiniboil posts; provisions are their chief returns.

River *la Coquille* is the nearest post to the River *qui appelle* and distant from it about a day's march overland, tho' in the fall it takes the canoes four days by water; a trifling post as most of the Indians about it go to the River *Tremblante* and River *qui appelle*; those that trade chiefly at this post are *Saulteux*.

River *Tremblante* is next to River *La Coquille* and distant from <sup>Rivière</sup> it a little further than it is from <sup>Tremblante,</sup> *Rivière qui appelle*. This, and Fort. the temporary posts established above it, furnish most of the beaver and otter in the Red River returns, but this trade has been almost ruined since the Hudson Bay Company entered the Assiniboil River by the way of Swan River, carrying their merchandise from one river to the other on horseback,—three days' journey,—who by that means and the short distance between Swan River and their factory at York Fort, from whence they are equiped, can arrive at the *Coude de l'homme*, in the Assiniboil River, a month sooner than we can return from the Grand Portage, secure the fall trade, give credits to the Indians and send them to hunt before our arrival; so that we see but very few in that quarter upon our arrival. River *Tremblante* has been Mr. Cuthbert Grant's favorite residence since he came to Red River.

Amongst the *Sauteux* in the Assiniboil River the same customs <sup>The</sup> and superstitions prevail as in their native places, Lake *La Pluie* <sup>Sauteux.</sup> and *Lac Rouge*. When a relation or a friend dies, to testify their <sup>Funeral.</sup> sorrow, they pierce their arms and thighs in divers places with arrows, and in their mournings daub their faces over with a mixture of earth and coal, and frequently cut off their hair.

A corpse is seldom taken out at the door of their lodge, but the place opposite to the deceased's head is raised up in order to

make a passage for it. The body is gathered up with its knees in the belly to make it as short as possible, and every thing, he used about his person, is interred with him, viz: his arms, accoutrements, provisions for his journey, tobacco to smoke, a dish and a wooden spoon, shoes and his best clothing upon his back. Their favorite manner of disposing of their dead is upon scaffolds raised a man's height above the ground, tho' they sometimes inter them in the ground.

Medecines. After the funeral succeeds the funeral feast, which is eaten sitting around the grave or scaffold, of which he is supposed to partake as well as of the Calumet, of which the stem end is pointed towards him that he may smoke. A lock of his hair, cut off before the interment, is carefully wrapped up and carried about with them for the space of twelve months, wrapped in a piece of the best cloth to be had and garnished with porcupine quills &c; &c., after their fancy.

Almost every great man or chief among the Indians is a juggler or doctor of physic,—their medecines being simples they collect themselves—and when one teaches to another the virtue of an herb he knew not, there is scarce any bound to his liberality in repaying his instructor; but since traders frequent these posts several Indians make use of European medecines.

The "*jonglerie*"

Every juggler pretends to have a familiar spirit who pays him frequent visits when his attendance is required and, in emergencies, directs by his answers, which are generally as dark and ambiguous as those of the ancient oracles among the heathen, and which may be interpreted in many different ways. This spirit never appears but in the *jonglerie*, a small circular apartment raised a man's height, inclosed with raw hides and bound with thongs. Into this place the juggler is trust, sometimes tied neck and heels, and a few minutes after, the Tabou and Chichiquoi begin beating and he kicks the cords that bound him out of the

juggling place, though no person is seen within. The *jonglerie* is about three feet in diameter.

All the answers he gets from his familiar are during his stay in the juggling house. Most Indians put an implicit belief on what the person in the *jonglerie* says for he speaks in two different voices to deceive his hearers.

The Crees were formerly a great and numerous nation. Their <sup>The Crees.</sup> language is spoken still by their descendants, which is a dialect of the Chippeway or Saulteux. They extended formerly from Lake Ouinipique—by some called Cristineau or Killistnoe Lake—as far north as Athabasca and a considerable way into the plains, by the River du Pas, Assiniboil River and Swan River, covering several hundred leagues territory. But, owing to their wars with their neighbours, the small pox of 1780-81 and other misfortunes, the third of the nation does not now remain.

Silver works and wampum are of no value in trading with them, and they never wear any of these articles as ornaments. They dress generally after the Assiniboil manner, all in leather shirts and leggings, a buffalo robe or a blanket, by way of covering, over the whole.

When an Indian swears, he takes the Master of Life to witness, <sup>The Master of Life.</sup> likewise the Earth, the Fire and the Water. They seldom pray to the Master of Life but when they are in imminent danger of perishing. At all other times, their petitions are to Gog and Magog, or the evil spirit, whom they much dread, for they have such a sublime idea of the Bounty of the Master of Life that they think it incompatible with him to afflict them. But the evil spirit, they say, is always meditating mischief to them and therefore they sacrifice to him to appease his anger and to divert him from his evil purposes.

Their only bloody sacrifice is to hang a dog; all the other sacrifices they use consist of European merchandises, country

produce, such as their own hunt, &c., which they chiefly deposit upon scaffolds raised a certain height above the earth, so as to be out of the reach of wild beasts.

**Marriages.** The Indians of the Red or Assiniboil rivers, in general, have no ceremonies in their marriages, or union of sexes. A young man who has taken a wife for the first time is under great difficulties; out of modesty, bashfulness or custom, he appears but seldom in his father-in-law's tent or lodge in the day time. They always come to sleep with the bride; after night fall and retire at day break.

They hunt the whole day to the emolument of their father-in-law, and in this servile condition they are obliged to remain the space of a year, and sometimes longer if the bride does not bring forth a son or a daughter to deliver the young Indian from slavery. After that has taken place, he is at liberty to choose a home for himself, though he still remains in a manner tributary to his father-in-law, and generally makes him some present, according to his abilities, as often as they meet or see each other.

Thus, daughters are as much esteemed as sons by the Indians, and, indeed, they bring them much greater emoluments, for a young man, as soon as he becomes husband, forsakes his father's tent to which he seldom returns as an inmate,—for women, in general, have a great ascendancy over their husbands and they always prefer living amongst those with whom they have been accustomed from their childhood,—tho' sons are much esteemed by them to make hunters and warriors, the two great objects of all Indians.

The Assiniboine Indians.

The Assiniboils are numerous in the Red River, and are divided into many tribes or families such as, *Les gens des canots*, or the Canoe tribe; *Les gens des filles*, the Girls tribe; *Les gens du bois fort*, or the Wood tribe, &c., &c., all speaking the same language with the Sioux or Naudawessi, and originally a tribe

of that numerous nation. Their dress consists of a buffalo <sup>Dress.</sup> dressed skin, which they wear as the *Saulteux* or *Augébois* do the blanket. Under this robe they wear a leather shirt, sometimes with the hair on, but dressed in the same manner as their robes. Their leggings are also made of dressed leather, those for the young folks are made of wolf, caberie and other skins of a fine quality, which they dress as white and pliable as *chamois*. Their shoes, as well as those of the Crees, are always made of buffalo leather the hair turned inwards which serves them as socks. Their caps are of fox and fishers' skins, with the head and tail of the beast tied so that the head of the wearer is encompassed by it; the tail hangs down between the shoulders, leaving the top or crown of the head without any covering.

As for their hair, they allow it to grow till it reaches their knees, that is, on one side of the head, and they take as much pains to keep it short on the other side. Lest this lock, which hangs down on one side over their shoulder, should happen to meet any violence when they intend to become intoxicated, they coil it like a cable on the top of their head, which gives them an uncouth aspect. This ridiculous custom is not peculiar to the Assiniboils, the Crees follow it also.

These people generally winter together in large camps and, make what the French call, *parcs*, an enclosure of wood in <sup>Buffalo</sup> form of a fence and circular into which they drive whole herds. <sup>parcs.</sup> of buffalos. This seems to be an ancient custom amongst all Indians inhabiting the plains, being a method that all travellers through these parts speak of, and which they want neither powder nor ball to execute.

The night previous to their sending for the buffalos, two or more young men make themselves ready—by a harangue the chief makes, for Indians know no command—to go and fetch the buffalos. Two, and sometimes even one, is sufficient to bring them to the ranks where tufts of bushes and other obstacles

are stuck up in the snow or ground to hide a person behind it from the buffaloes, and thus every man, women and child in the camp have their stations.

A good runner frequently goes before the band with the hair of his robe outwards and half bent, so as to represent a buffalo and, by that means, decoys them into the park which has a small door to make him a passage out.

After the band is entered, the women stand upon the door which has an easy ascent upon the outside, but is quite steep within, and the paramount of the camp lights a pipe and offers the end to the buffaloes or to some old bull among them whom he takes for the father or chief of the band and, after thanking the Master of Life for sending food to themselves and to their children, he harangues him something to this effect: "My Grandfather, we are glad to see you, and happy to find that you are not come in a shameful manner, for you have brought plenty of your young men with you. Be not angry at us; we are obliged to destroy you to make ourselves live".

After the harangue is over, they smoke their pipes, sitting around the *Parc*, and then shoot all the herd down with their arrows; fire arms are prohibited upon this occasion. The slaughter being finished, the Chief of the Park distributes a little swansdown, coloured in vermillon, upon each buffalo's head, and leaves every person at liberty to take what he thinks proper. But, so superstitious are these people, that the chief of the park thinks that if he were to eat any of this meat thus killed, it would be out of his power to make buffaloes enter his park ever after; so he must have meat killed in the open field for his own use.

Mourning. They testify their sorrow for their deceased much in the same manner as the Crees and *Saulteux* do, by piercing their thighs and arms with arrows, cutting their hair and covering their

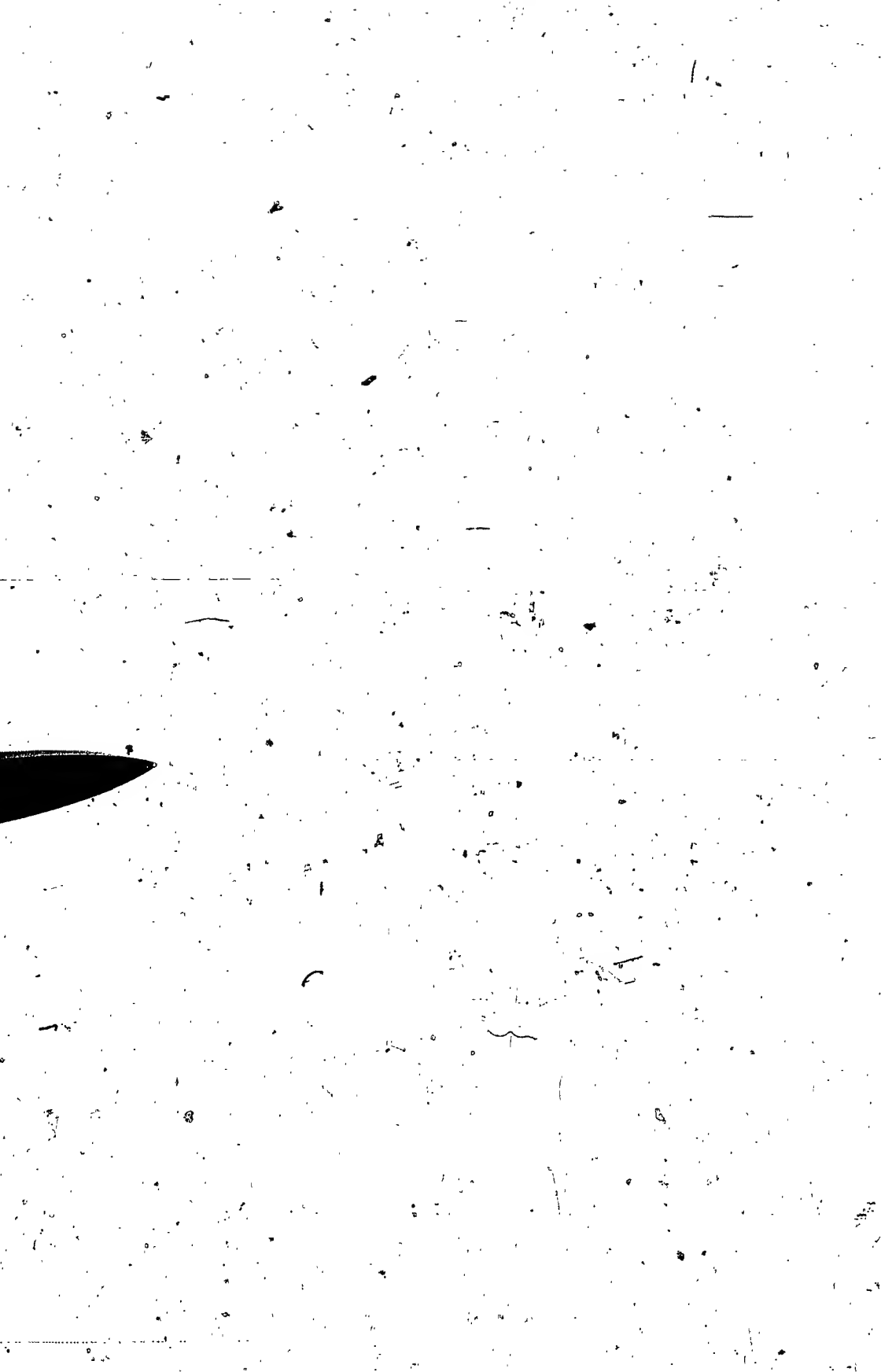
heads with patches of earth; their women cut their hair and scarify their legs.

The men, as well as those of the Crees, have no dancing, but the women of both nations dance by moving, all at the same time, from right to left and then back again, without giving themselves any other motion than shifting their toes and heels alternately and without breaking their order in the least, having all their faces the same way, and being drawn up in one or two lines, according to their number or as the ground permits.

The Assiniboils of the Red River are, in general, a lazy, indolent and perfidious set, and, I believe, the worst hunters of any Indians in the North-West who have traders amongst them. Their whole hunt consists of wolves, foxes, kits and buffalo robes; for beavers, otters and other good furs, they seldom take any. They are likewise great thieves and will steal from a rusty iron nail to a horse. Stealing horses is quite a necessary trade among them, and they steal them from their own traders as well as from the Indians of the Missouri and of *Fort des Prairies*.

Most of the Red River Indians go to war during the absence of the canoes at the Grand Portage upon the Rocky Mountain and Snake Indians or any of the nations at a distance from their own country. In these excursions they take forty days or two months, sometimes travelling night and day, especially on their return, if they have been successful, for fear of a pursuit; and they mostly return by different routes, leaving the wounded to shift for themselves.





## EXTRACTS

FROM

MR JOHN M<sup>C</sup>DONNELL'S

JOURNAL <sup>(1)</sup>

(1793-1795.)

1793.

Arrived at the fort of the River *qui appelle*, called by Mr. ROBERT GRANT, when he built it, *Fort Espérance*.—About sixty lodges of Indians at the fort, chiefly Crees.

I went with Mr. C. Grant to the Forks to separate the men, canoes and goods intended for the Upper Fort, or River *Tremblante*, from those that are to come here.

(1) The clerks of the North-West Company—especially those in charge of posts and trading expeditions—were required to keep a journal or diary, in which they took notes daily of all occurrences which might be of importance to the Company and to their trade. They were so particular on that score that, when their always very small stock of paper became exhausted, they had recourse to birch bark, upon which they would scribble, as well as they could, and with whatever substitute for ink they could find, the notes required of them, and sew the leaves up in book form for their *Bourgeois*.

These journals are, of necessity, uninteresting reading, as a rule; but they may, in many instances, have their importance in recalling old names of men and places which the rapid strides of civilisation will probably soon have consigned to oblivion.

Having been written without any thought of publicity and with no desire to create effect, they must, so far as they go, give a better and safer idea of what the Natives of the North-West really were at the time they were written than most writings of higher pretensions.

The extracts here published, from Mr. McDonnell's journal of 1793-1795, give a fair idea of what most of those journals and diaries were.

13th, Sun : Returned from the Forks after performing the duty we went upon.—Traded with the Assinibouans a quantity of provisions ; many of them went away not chusing to stay and drink with the Crees.

15th, Tues : Gave the Crees some credits.—They were drunk and troublesome all night.

16th, Wed Some of the Squesipi-bouatac, *gens des filles* arrived, made their presents and got drunk.

18th, Fri : Neil McKay set out to build and winter at the forks of this river, alongside of Mr. Peter Grant, who has made his pitch about five leagues from here. Mr. N. McKay's effects are carried in two boats, navigated by five men, each. Mr. C. Grant set out also for his quarters of River *Tremblante*, about thirty leagues from here. The dogs made a woeful howling at all the departures.

19th, Sat : Peltier and Sansregret came from the Pine Fort with letters from John Miln, left in charge there, which I immediately sent after Mr. C Grant by Jos. Tranquille. Seventeen warriors came from the banks of the Missouri for tobacco. They slept ten nights on their way, and are emissaries from a party of Assinibouans who went to war upon the Scioux.

20th, Sun : The warriors traded a few skins brought upon their backs, and went off ill-pleased with their reception. After dark, the dogs kept a constant barking, which induced a belief that some of the warriors were lurking about the fort for an opportunity to steal. I took a sword and a pistol and went to sleep in the store. Nothing took place.

22nd, Tues : Paul Tranquille came from the Forks for a supply of goods for Neil McKay, which I sent him.—Dug up and entered our potatoes, say : ten bushels.

.....  
 There fell six inches of snow last night.—Drew up the canoes 24th, Thur :  
 to pass the winter.—The river frozen over.—A single lodge of  
 Assinibouans came in to trade.

.....  
 ..... Two of Mr. N. McKay's men came from the 31st, Thur :  
 Forks, supposing this to be All Saints' Day.—Raised a flag staff,  
 poplar, 50 feet above ground.

.....  
 Five men, five loaded horses and five dog trains started with NOVEMBER,  
 goods for Mr. Grant's River *Tremblante*. Peltier, old Robert 6th, Wed :  
 Taylor, (freeman from the Missouri), Toussaint Charbonneau,  
 Gervais and Belair started for Pine Fort. Mr. Grant is so ill off  
 for writers, that he hired this Robert Taylor for \$60 for the  
 winter to write for Augé, whom he left at River *la-Souris*  
 alongside with Mr. Ronald Cameron, and where we have since  
 learned Mr. D. McKay, with his Hudson's Bay boats and canoes,  
 is also.

.....  
 The men were in chace of a white Buffalo all day but could 23rd, Sat :  
 not get within shot of him. Faiguant killed two cows.—a mild  
 day.

The men commenced a fresh chase of the white buffalo, but 24th, Sun :  
 with as little success as the preceeding day.....

.....  
 St. Andrews day. Hoisted the flag in honor of the Titulary 30th, Sat :  
 Saint of Scotland.—A beautiful day.—Expected Messrs Peter  
 Grant and Neil McKay to dinner,—they sent an excuse by Bon-  
 neau.

.....  
 .....—Sent Mr. Peter Grant a Town and Country DECEMBER.  
 Magazine of 90 (1790). Poitra's wife made me nine pairs of 2nd, Mon :  
 shoes.

3rd, Tues : Poitras killed a cow at the *Prairie à la Paille*, half a mile from the fort, which La Grave drew home.

10th, Tues : The nine men equipt (on their own account) for the Missouri started, viz : Raphaël Faignan, Antoine Bourrier dit Lavigne, Joseph Dubé, J. B. Lafrance, Joseph Tranquille, J. B. Bertrand, Chrysostôme Joncquard, Louis Houle et François La Grave ; the *Machinaway* (1) *du Chien Fou* and associate came in ; two lodges. The former made a present of 30 Ps of dried meat and 10 skins for which he got 9 gals, to take away with him (2). He made a small present of 5 ps dried meat and 10 fresh tongues, to drink here, for which he got 8 *foles*. Gave the hunter 6 *foles* to drink with them.

28th, Sat : An Assinibouan came from the 2nd lake of this river, who says the warriors are returned, having killed one man and eight women and taken two female captives.

1791.

JANUARY : Mr. Grant gave the men two gallons rum and three fathoms of tobacco, by way of New Year's gift.

4th, Satur : Mr. C. Grant started on his return home to the Upper Fort. As I was firing, with my own musket, in compliment to my *Bourgeois*' departure, a handful of powder I held blew up accidentally and burnt my hand and face a good deal,.....

10th, Fri : The *Frere du chien fou* went off.—An Assinibouan woman was delivered of her child in the house, and had no other screen

(1) Aide-de-camp, companion, attendant, sometimes brother.

(2) These presents were independant of the regular trade, and always acknowledged with liquor or tobacco.

than her husband's buffalo robe to keep her from view along the cheek or *jambage* of the chimney, while in labor, which did not last above a quarter of an hour. She was trading out in the cold air and doing the other painful drudgeries of her station an hour after, with her first tender infant on her back, same as if nothing had happened.

.....  
*Le Père du Grimaceu* sent two young men to the fort to let us know that his son was dead, and to get a drop, to cheer his spirits on this mournful occasion,—sent him a gal. rum—.....  
 I cut 20 sacks or *taureaux* to put pemican in and gave them to Minie to sew (1)

.....  
 The fifteen men sent to Pine Fort returned with 4 rolls Brazil tobacco, 1 roll Spencer's twist, 1 keg powder, 3 sacks balls, 2 bales goods, 3 kegs highwines, 8lbs vermilion, 6 bunches blue beads, 3 laced capots, 4 capots of 4 ells, 2 ditto 3½, 1 ditto 3 ells; 5 blankets 2½ pts.—Gave Minie 40 more *taureaux* to sew, after I had cut them.

.....  
*Le Père du Grimaceu* sent for tobacco in the morning and arrived about noon, *en traite*. He adopted me in lieu of the son he lately lost. It is now cold weather, certainly, but this man came to the fort without anything upon his body but a single pair of shoes upon his feet; the rest of his body was as bare naked as when he was born, and he shivered like a leaf with cold; he had come about two miles in this state, thro' an open plain.....

.....  
 Sent young Azure to guide Jollifon to Mr. Grant's, as I could not take on myself to give goods to another department

(1) Buffalo raw hides, cut and made up in bags, containing about eighty pounds of pemican.

without his knowledge, this being a case not provided for in my instructions.

FEBRUARY *Vieux Frère, Camarade de Paulette*,—Poitras' father—and five  
12th. Wed: young men came *sans dessein* (1) from the Forks; *La Merde*  
& *d'Eturgeon* and two more Assinibouans came *en traite* and made  
a present of 14 ps. dried meat, 6 bladders grease, 5 ps. pounded  
meat, 12 fresh tongues and 4½ skins; gave him ½ a keg rum;  
gave the chiefs at the fort, each a *fole*, in all, 7 *foles*.

27th. Thu: Paid Mary Lafontaine for lacing 14 pairs of snowshoes, and  
ten buffalo skins she dressed and cut into cords for the packs,  
and for cutting ten more skins into thongs that were dressed to  
her hand, 15 plues.

MARCH ..... *Le Grand Diable, le Pensionnaire, Petit Plue, &c.*,  
3rd. Mon: came to the fort and made a present: the first, of 21 skins and  
a buffalo robe; *le Pensionnaire*, one of 8 buffalo robes. Gave  
the former 7 gals. and the latter half a keg. *Tranquille* bought  
a slave woman—i. e., taken in war—from the latter for two  
horses and 20 pluez in goods. Gave the hunter six *foles* to drink  
with them.

24th. Mon: Many Indians came for tobacco who say they are coming to  
trade *en loge*, say: 43 tents, chiefly Watombagh-è-na-ton, *Gens du*  
*Grand Diable*.

MAY.  
1st, Thurs: Sent off the canoes early in the morning, Mr. Grant and I set  
out about noon.—Slept at the Forks *Rivière qui appelle*.

(1) This expression is still in use among the French Half Breeds of the North-West  
and signifies, "without any cause," "for nothing."

Left the Forks at 2 P. M.—Slept at Tabault's campment; next 2nd, Fri: day, rain forced us ashore a few points below the Little River.

Killed five cows and two buffalo calves and camped below the 4th, Sun: fort of Mountain *à la Bosse* about two leagues.—Next day, overtook and passed old Houle at the long point of the campment de *l'Étredeux* (1).—Camped below the *Loge de Paille*.

Passed the Rapid River. This day we passed about 400 buf- 6th, Tues: faloes drowned in the river. They lay on almost every point, huddled together.—Arrived at Augé's River *la Souris* Fort; sun, an hour high. Augé has sad complaints againts his H. B. oppo- nent, Mr. Donald, alias Mad. McKay.....

By order of Mr. Grant, I took down three or four or five de- 8th, Thur: clarations of his own men against Mr. Donald McKay, in consequence of which we took him prisoner for firing at Augé and laying in ambush for his life. I was his guard and slept with him at night.

Mr. Grant allowed M. McKay, *le malin*, to go home, seal his 9th, Fri: journal and write to his chief, Mr. McNabb. I went with him and, according to his promise, he came back quietly with me.—The canoes and boats arrived.—Finished marking Augé's packs, 43.

Left River *La Souris* after breakfast with 14 canoes and 3 10th, Sa: boats. Mr. Grant thought proper to release Mr. Donald McKay—so we did not embark him—and he was so pleased with recovering his liberty that it was at his house we breakfasted, by his particular request.

.....  
Finished making the Pine Fort packs.—Arranged the men in 13th, Tue: the canoes and boats just in the same order they arrived here last fall. The Indians in the lodges around the fort had a dreadful false alarm from the Scioux, which made them all

(1) Probably "l'Entredoux".



rush to the fort gate in great confusion to be admitted into it, quite armed.

.....  
 16th, Fri: Left the Pine Fort after breakfast. Poor old Jos. Duchésne; alias *Pirouguelon*, cried for sorrow at parting with Mr. Grant...

17th, Sat: Passed River *du Milieu*, *Fort des Trembles* and *Portage la Prairie*, a little below which we passed the Hudson's Bay shore.—

Camped at Adhemar's Fort.—Saw a great many sturgeons, but caught none, tho' we tried repeatedly.

18th, Sun: We were up and under arms, sitting at the feet of trees all last night,—i. e., each man his tree—around the campement, but it proved to be a false alarm. Slept a little above the old *Fort de la Reine*.

19th, Mon: Met two canotées of South-Men—ascending, headed by a Mons. Fournier.—Took Morelle, a deserter of ours from Pembina River, from him. The first prairie below *Fort de la Reine* has been called the *Prairie à Fournier* after this South Trader, ever since.

These canoes are the property of Beaubien and Lavolette. Fournier took some breakfast with us. While ashore, a storm accompanied by rain, thunder and lightning overtook us.—Camped near Blondishe's Fort.

20th, Tue: Arrived at the Forks Red River about noon, where we found Frederick Schutz and Desmarais from the Pembina River. They informed us that Fournier had letters for Mr. Grant from Le Sieur and Frederick himself, which he denied, tho' Mr. Grant enquired of him.—Slept at the Forks.

.....  
 23rd, Fri: Started from the Forks with 19 canoes and two boats manned by near 100 men and masters:—slept a few points below Mr. Frobisher's Fort.

24th, Sat: Arrived at the Lake at 10 A. M., but were stopped there the rest of the day by a head wind:—cold, Misty rain.

.....  
 Left the entrance of the Red River and embarked on Lake 26th, Mon :  
 Winipik at 10 A. M., the wind having abated.—Camped at the  
 Grand Marais, six leagues on our way from the entrance of the  
 Red River.

Left the Grand Marais at noon, Mr. Grant's canoe turned into 27th, Tues :  
 the Bay of the Indian Portage, but I went straight for the usual  
 one of *Ile à la Biche*, and arrived at the Sieur's Fort ; (1) with a  
 fair wind, an hour before sunset ; neither Mr. Grant, nor the  
 canoes came.

A stormy day ;—I am much concerned for Mr. Grant and the 28th, Wed :  
 canoes behind, for the wind fell and rose by intervals ; it was  
 calm apparently for two hours and, then, frightful gusts of  
 wind came on a sudden.

.....  
 My *Bourgeois* arrived in the morning, and the two boats soon 29th, Thu :  
 after.

.....  
 Piché was obliged to push his boat on account of *Pied de June*  
*Loutre*—whom he had filled drunk—proving too troublesome. 1st, Sun :  
 Most of our canoes started also,—Took on account of what we  
 have here.

Mr. Grant set out for the Grand Portage in a half light canoe, 2nd, Mon :  
 and I am to go out in charge of the Brigade.

N. B.—This being a route you are as well acquainted with as  
 myself, I shall not trouble you with my voyaging diary till I  
 get back to the River *qui appelle* Fort, this autumn.

1794.

Left our campment at the *Bassin* early in the morning.—Great serr.  
 numbers of buffaloes all along the route.—Breakfasted at the 28th. Sun :

(1) Fort Alexander, at the mouth of the River Winnipeg.

River *aux Castors*, three leagues further, and arrived at the Fort of the River *qui appelle* about 4 P. M.—Killed two bulls on the way.—The distance we came to-day is 7 leagues, that is, 4 from where we breakfasted, to the fort.

OCTOBER  
3rd, Friday Mr. Grant started early for the River *La Coquille*, where Mr. Peter Grants people have built a fort this summer. This place is half way between here and Mr. Grants' residence of last year, about 14 to 15 leagues over land. Paul Tranquille came at dusk from Mountain *à la Bosse*, where we left John Min, old Houle &c. to build; Messrs. Wm. McKay and Peter Grant had arrived there before he left it.....

6th, Mon: .....Pulled the potatoes; only 9 bushels.—Great herds of buffaloes within two or three miles of the post, say: in the plain just above the *Grande Côte* on the Assinibouan road.

7th, Tues: Sent Louis Houle and Pierre Etienne Ducharme, to remain at the *Passage de la Corne de Cerf* to get Poitras' equipment and news from Mr. Wm. McKay when he passes. /

13th, Mon: Calculated the pickets wanted for circumventing the fort, say: 1,000, about 60 to a man.

1795  
JANUARY  
5th, Mon: St. James, St. Pierre, Bédard, Lacouture, Pierre Alain and Gareau arrived from *Rivière La Souris* with pieces. The latter staid behind at the *Foutreau's* lodge. He gave them a keg of one gallon rum he had of his own, and that not sufficing to get the *Foutreau's* daughter, as he expected, he pierced the keg of high-wines he had in charge and gave it to the Indians, pure; in short, there are six quarts missing off the keg and six large knives wanting in his lead.

The whole keg would have been taken from him by the *Foulreau* and his band, who got enraged with drinking pure highwines, had it not been for the *Gendre du Foulreau*, a good Indian, who hurried Garéau and Alain,—the *Joueur de Goblets*—off in the night, *en fuyards*, leaving the girl, as well as the rum and knives in the quiet possession of the Indians.—Vast numbers of buffaloes quite near the fort; the men kill some every day.

.....

St. Denis and St. Pierre returned from Mountain à la Bosse MARCH  
with the afflicting news of poor John Miln's death which 14th, Sat-  
happened last Sunday, 8th instant.—His sickness and death  
happened suddenly and show how necessary it is to be prepared  
for that awful change that cannot be reacted over again.

.....

*Grand Diable* arrived and made me a present of 6 buffalo robes 24th, Tue :  
and 10 wolves.—gave him, in return, a large keg and a chief's  
clothing in consideration of his bringing and sending his band  
to trade here all winter, and in recompense for his giving the  
Fort a good name and sending every person who would listen  
to him to trade. *Ot-high-iche*, Tabault's daughter and other  
Indians who came with him, made a present of 4 buffalo robes  
for which I gave them two gallons.....

.....

*Le Grand Diable* went away after making me a tender of his 26th, Thu :  
wife's favors and seemed surprised and chagrined at my refusal,  
but the Lady much more so, and I thought it prudent to make  
her some trifling presents to pacify her.

.....

Snowed incessantly all day again;—about two feet fresh APRIL  
snow on the ground..... 14th, Wed :

.....

28th, Tues: Gummed our canoes and launched them.—Started them for the Forks with 138 + 137 taureaux of pemican.—*Le Frère, les deux Cœurs* came to sell a young slave girl, which, on my refusal, Poitras purchased.

.....

.....

MAY

The Brigade and I left the Forks of the River *qui appelle* 18th, Mon: about sunrise, say: 9 canoes and 3 boats, well loaded. My canoe having an extra man, I took the lead, intending to have spare time to hunt and prepare for the arrival of the other crafts at Mountain à la Bosse.

Observing a good many carcasses of buffaloes in the river and along its banks, I was taken up the whole day with counting them and, to my surprise, found I had numbered when we put up at night, 7360, drowned and mired along the river and in it. It is true, in one or two places, I went on shore and walked from one carcass to the other, where they lay from three to five files deep.

Camped at the first little plain with a steep high bank below the Grand Bois, where we made a good kettle of beaver, goose and duck.—Gave men a *coup* and slept soundly.—The brigade behind.....

21st, Thur:

.....Overtook Messrs. Grant and Geo. McKay's canoe ashore,—breakfasting amongst the fine oak grove above the Rapid River where they had slept, shifted and shaved.—Started with them after breakfast and kept in company with them till we arrived at Fort of River *La Souris*.....

There were five different oppositions built here last winter, all working against one another.

Jussome and the Mandan men arrived here with their returns, fifteen days ago, all but Jos. Dubé, who deserted from the rest and staid with the Indians of the Missouri.

.....

Overtook all our crafts at the River *aux morts*..... Entered JUNE. —  
Lâke Ouinipique and crossed over to the *Grand Marais* where 4th, THURS:  
we were stopped by the wind the rest of this day and whole of  
next.—Set fire to the reeds which made a blazing fire.....

Left *Grand Marais* tho' it still blew and reached *Ile à la Biche*, 6th, SATUR:  
where we waited our boats, then proceeded to *Pointe au Sable*.—  
Next morning, early, arrived at *Bas de la Rivière* House where  
we found Messrs. McLellan and Latour, arrived from their  
winter quarters.



MR FRANCOIS-ANTOINE LAROCQUE

THE

MISSOURI JOURNAL

1804-1805





THE  
MISSOURI JOURNAL

BY

F. A. LAROCQUE <sup>(1)</sup>

CLERK OF THE NORTH-WEST CO.

1804-1805

Set off from Fort Assiniboine, at 2 P. M., for the Missouri with a trading equipment. We had nine horses, five of which were loaded with the Company's property. Our company consisted of Charles McKenzie, Bte. Lafrance, Wm. Morrison, Joseph Azure, Bte. Turenne, Alexis McKay and myself. Encamped about three miles from the Fort, near a small pond of stagnated

1804.  
11th, Nov:

(1) Mr. François-Antoine Larocque was a brother of Mr. Joseph Larocque, who occupied for many years a very prominent position in the North-West and Hudson Bay Companies. See: Tassé, *Les Canadiens de l'Ouest*.

Mr. F. A. Larocque was a man of good abilities, of great courage and energy. He was well read, studious and equally proficient in the use of the French and English languages, but he decidedly preferred the latter.

The life of an Indian trader had not for him the attractions it had for his brother; he soon left the North-West, came to Montreal and entered business, in which he was most unfortunate. He passed the last years of his life in close retirement and arduous study, and died, much advanced in years, in the Grey nunnery of St. Hyacinthe.

Mr. Larocque married a Miss Côté, the daughter of an independent North-West trader, and the sister of Mr. Jules Maurice Quesnel. He left only one son, Mr. Alfred Larocque, the father of Mr. le Chevalier Larocque, ex-papal zouave; of Mr. Armand Larocque and of Mrs. Aldérie Ouimot, the wife of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

water in order to wait for Morrison who had remained behind with one horse and load. He arrived an hour after: sent McKay to the Fort to fetch provisions for himself, which he had forgotten. Messrs. Chaboillez and Henry came to see me; they remained with us a few hours, bid us farewell and departed.

.....

14th. Our course since leaving the fort has been west of south. Set off in a south south-west direction, but the plains being burnt, we changed our course north-west by west in order to find food for our horses, having been informed that the plains were not burnt in that direction.—Encamped at sunset at the last woods upon the second river of the Elk Head, having crossed the first river nearly at its source in the plains.—Mr. McKenzie broke his gun.

15th. Removed our situation to about seven miles higher up the river, there being better food for the horses, and from whence the *traverse* of the plains is shorter to River *La Souris*, as it was impossible to get by day to that river from where we slept last night, as there is not a stick of wood in the intermediate space.

16th. Set off early in the morning and did not stop at all in the course of the day. Perceived the woods upon the *Souris* at sunset and arrived at them before dark, after having crossed a creek in the plains, called by the Indians "Deep River," from its being very deep in some places, where the water gathers and forms into lakes..... The plains were burnt in many places.

.....

18th. Set off one hour and a half before day light,—walked hard till noon, when we arrived at the woods,—stopped one hour to refresh ourselves and horses,—resumed our course, still following the river and encamped upon it at sunset.

.....

..... The plains being on fire to the south-west, and the 19th. wind blowing from that quarter, brought such volumes of smoke as prevented us from seeing one hundred yards before us, so that we were forced to stop at a creek which lay in our way and which disemboges in the *Souris*, and there pass the night.

Went down the Creek and came to the river which we fol-<sup>20th.</sup> lowed for an hour and a half; we again ascended the hills. The wind having shifted south, the weather was clear for about two hours, when it again veered to the south-west and we were involved in smoke, but not so thick as yesterday.

At 10 A.M., we stopped on a hill to look at a dark spot with the help of a spy glass; it appeared moving and we found it to be buffaloes. As we were moving off, we heard a number of people whooping and hollowing as Indians generally do when at war. Hills prevented us from seeing whom they proceeded from; we immediately unsheated our guns for defence, as we were certain that, if they were numerous enough, they would endeavour to pillage us of our goods, it being their fixed determination to prevent, as much as they can, any communication between their traders and the Missouri Indians, as they wish to engross that trade themselves.

However, they soon appeared to the number of eight, and behaved very peaceably; they asked for a little tobacco, we gave them four inches to each and twenty rounds of ammunition among them all. As we were going off, one of them went before the horses and endeavoured to prevent them from passing, being, I suppose, displeased at not receiving more. He let his robe fall and put an arrow in his bow, as if to let fly at the horse; however, we soon got him to give way and went on. One of them followed us for about one mile, and, being questioned, said he wanted more tobacco. I refused giving him any, being very sorry they had got any at all.

They informed us that they were coming from the Missouri villages, where a great number of their nation, that is Assiniboines, had been and were on their way back, whom they said we would probably meet with them and likewise with a band of Knisteneaux who had also been there trading corn and horses.

Continued our journey and encamped at sunset on the side of a creek. The plains all burnt, excepting the spot on which we encamped. When it was dark, we tied our horses with long cords to pickets fixed in the ground, in order that they might not get away from us during the night; kept watch over them all night by turns, being apprehensive that some of these vagabonds had followed us to steel them.

22nd.

Prepared to set off, but two horses belonging to Lafrance and Azure are missing. Remained here the whole day to search for them but to no effect.—Killed a bull. At sunset removed a little higher upon the *coulée* to a better place for the feeding of our horses, where we kept them tied to pickets all night.

23rd.

Set off at break of day, taking the loads of the missing horses on Mr. McKenzie's horse and my own.—Found the Assiniboine road leading to the Missouri at 9 o'clock A. M.;—at mid-day passed one of their encampments, counted seventy-five fire-places;—passed two more encampments in the evening and stopped for the night by the side of a small lake around which, and no where else, there was grass for our horses.....

24th.

Set off at sunrise; two hours after, met with two of the Big Belly Indians who were going hunting; they appeared well pleased to see us; I smoked a pipe with them and departed. At mid-day, saw the smoke of one of the Big Belly villages to the south of which we passed; at two, arrived at another of their villages where I enquired for Charbonneau, (it being his usual place of residence,) and was informed by a Hudson's Bay man, who is there for the purposes of trade, that he was with some

Americans, below the Mandan village, to whom he is engaged. Being unwilling to leave the Hudson's Bay man here alone to get the whole trade of this village, I got the horses unloaded and made a small equipment of goods which I gave in charge to Mr. McKenzie.

Left Morrison with Mr. McKenzie in the best lodge we could find, and proceeded to the Mandan villages with the remainder of the goods—excepting an equipment destined for the upper village of the Big Bellies—On the road thither, met with Captain Lewis, chief of the American party—with Jussiaume and Charbonneau—; had about a quarter of an hour's conversation with him, during which he invited me to his house and appeared very friendly.

Arrived at the Mandan village at 3 P. M., entered the lodge of the Black Cat, the chief of the village, sent for the "Grand," the chief of the other Mandan village, gave them both a chief's clothing and explained to them the motive of my coming &c.—gave a pipe of tobacco to all the grown men as usual; sent Azure and McKay with the Grand on the other side of the river with an equipment of goods in charge of Azure.

Lafrance traded 350 skins in wolves in kits from the Indians of this village, he being the person to whom I gave this outfit in charge. The Indians appeared to be of a very thievish disposition.

Went over to see Azure, and what trade he had, which was about 250 plues. Returned to the Black Cat's. Captain Lewis returned from above and stopped at the lodge.—Spoke to Charbonneau about helping as interpreter in the trade to the Big-Bellies; he told me that, being engaged to the Americans, he could not come without leave from Captain Lewis, and desired me to speak to him, which I did. Capt. Lewis told me that, as he had no business for Charbonneau but at times during the winter, he had no objections to his helping me upon

certain conditions, which agreeing to, Charbonneau promised me he would come next morning.

28th. The Black Cat went to dine with the Americans with two other chiefs, upon an invitation from Captain Lewis, who had also invited me, but, expecting Charbonneau, I declined going.

29th. Still very bad weather which, as I thought, prevented Charbonneau from coming. In the evening the weather cleared, The "Lewis & Clarke" expedition. went to see what was the reason he did not come,—was very politely received by Captains Lewis and Clarke and passed the night with them. Just as I arrived, they were despatching a man for me, having heard that I intended giving flags and medals to the Indians, which they forbid me from giving in the name of the United States, saying that the Government looked upon those things as the sacred emblems of the attachment of the Indians to their country. As I had neither flags nor medals, I ran no risk of disobeying those orders, of which I assured them.

They next called Charbonneau and gave him leave to come with me, but strictly enjoined not to utter a word to the Indians which might in any way be to the prejudice of the United States, or of any of its citizens, although I should order him to do so, "which," said they, turning to me, "we are very far from thinking you would."

Their party consists of 40 odd men besides themselves, and are sent by Government for the purpose of exploring the North West countries to the Pacific Ocean, so as to settle the boundary line between the British and the American territories; likewise to make it known to the Indians on the Missouri and adjacent country, that they are under the Government of the Big Knives, who will protect them, and supply them with all their wants, as long as they shall behave as dutiful children of the Great Father, the President of the United States, &c.,

&c.,—which has been the continual subject of their harangues to the Indians throughout the winter.

They showed me their passports and letters of recommendation from the French, Spanish and British Ministers at the city of Washington, which say that the object of their voyage is purely scientific and literary, and in no way concerning trade; desiring all persons under their respective Governments to aid and assist that party as much as in their power lies, in case they should be in want of anything in the course of their voyage. They have, likewise, letters of credit from the American Government for the payment of any drafts they should draw upon it.

They left Philadelphia in the Spring of 1803, came down the Ohio, passed the winter at the mouth of the Missouri, at St. Lewis, in the Illinois country. It took them the whole summer to come to the Mandans, at which place they arrived in October last. They made treaties of peace with all the Indian nations they saw on their road, excepting the Sioux, with whom they were very near coming to an engagement. They made presents of a flag, medal, chiefs clothing, tobacco, knives, beads and other trinkets to every chief of the Indian nation which they saw, but have not given a single shot of ammunition.

They told me it was not the policy of the United States to restrain commerce, and fetter it as was the case when Louisiana belonged to the Spanish; that we and all persons who should come in their territories for trade or for any other purpose, will never be molested by an American officer or commandant, unless his behaviour is such as would subject an American citizen himself to punishment. Nor will any trader be obliged to pay for permission to trade, as was formerly the case under the Spanish, as no exclusive privilege will be granted. Every one will be free to trade after his own manner.

Free trade  
with the  
Indians.

One thing that Government may do, as it has already done about Detroit and other places where opposition in trade ran



high, is to have a public store well assorted of all kinds of Indian goods, which store is to be opened to the Indians only when the traders in opposition run to too excessive lengths; for the purpose of under selling them and, by that means, keep them quiet. No *dérouine* to take place, no liquors to be sold, &c.

In short, during the time I was there a very grand plan was schemed, but its being realized is more than I can tell, although the Captains say they are well assured it will.

30th. Returned to the Mandans; Charbonneau got ready to come with me, but just as he was setting off, he received order to follow Captain Clarke, who was going with 25 men to join a party of Mandans and repulse some Sioux who killed a Mandan yesterday, and were supposed to be in the neighborhood. Went to see Azure and give him direction how to make the packs, as I intend to send to the fort very soon, having wherewith to load the Company's horses.

DECEMBER  
1st. Captain Clarke's expedition did not succeed and Charbonneau joined me here this morning. Prepared to set off with him to settle the Upper Village of the Big Bellies, when Mr. McKenzie and an Hudson's Bay man arrived. We all set off together and slept at the Little Village in Mr. McKenzie's lodge.

2nd. Left this village in the morning with Charbonneau and Turenne with the Upper Village outfit, at which place we arrived at mid-day. Entered in the lodge of the White Wolf, a great chief and a well disposed Indian towards the Whites. Clothed him as a chief and harangued him, &c.; he got a good bed made for us and we fixed our goods. Gave him 30 rounds ammunition, 3 knives, 1 awl, vermilion and a few beads.

5th. Snowing very hard, wind north-west. In the evening, my man went to see the Hudson's Bay trader and found him ready to set off with an Indian, having each a small bundle on their backs. He came and told me of it, upon which, I ordered him

and Charbonneau to get ready, made a small equipment of goods into two parcels, got an Indian to guide them, and sent them in pursuit of the Hudson's Bay man who, not finding the Indians where they expected, returned. My people who were going met them, so they all returned together and arrived at eleven at night.

Despairing to find the horses (1), got an old man to make a harangue, offering 30 balls and powder, 1 knife and a bit of tobacco to him who would find the horses and bring them back. Gave my landlord, the White Wolf, 50 balls and powder, 2 knives, 2 awls,  $\frac{1}{2}$  fathom of tobacco, 2 flints, 2 wormers and a little vermilion. Intending to set off to-morrow morning for the Fort, harangued him, &c., &c. Spoke to Charbonneau about his debt, telling that as he had two horses, he might send one in part payment, &c.; he consented, and early in the morning, I sent Morrison to Fort Mandan for the horse. Wrote a few lines to Captain Lewis and Mr. McKenzie.

Morrison arrived with Charbonneau's horse, brought a note from Captain Lewis. Sent Indians to seek the horses which had not yet been found, offered 40 rounds, 1 looking glass, 1 knife and a bit of tobacco, &c.,—heard that the horses had been found and left at the little village below,—set off with Morrison to go and fetch them. Returned after dark and found Mr. Heney who was just arrived from Fort Assiniboine with two Indians. He brought a letter from Mr. Chaboillez which altered my plan as to going to the Fort; so that I will now pass the winter here.

Set off with Mr. Heney to go to the Americans; slept at Mr. McKenzie's.

Arrived at Fort Mandan, being the name the Americans give to their Fort which is constructed in a triangular form, ranges

16th.  
Fort Man-  
dan.

(1) Lost and unsuccessfully "looked for" since several days.

of houses making two sides, and a range of amazing long pickets, the front. The whole is made so strong as to be almost cannon ball proof. The two ranges of houses do not join one another, but are joined by a piece of fortification made in the form of a demi circle that can defend two sides of the Fort, on the top of which they keep sentry all night; the lower parts of that building serves as a store. A sentinel is likewise kept all day walking in the Fort.

17th. We remained here all day. The Captain enquired a great deal of Mr. Heney concerning the Sioux nation and local circumstances of that country and lower part of the Missouri, of which they took notes \* .....

18th. Slept at Mr. McKenzie and heard that 16 horses had been stolen at the Upper Village by the Assiniboines.

19th. Arrived at my lodge; the report of so many horses having been stolen was confirmed, among which were 2 belonging to the Company, and 2 to Lafrance.—People buying horses; bought a stout mule for which I paid: 1 gun, 1 large axe, 1 awl, 1 looking glass, 1 fathom (1) Hudson's Bay red strouds, 1 fathom tobacco, 2 flints, 3 strings pipe beads, 300 balls and powder, 2 knives, 2 wormers, and a little vermilion.

About sixty warriors set off to revenge upon the Assiniboines for stealing their horses. Took an inventory of the remaining goods here.

20th. Sold an old gun to Turenne to help him to buy a horse; wrote to Mr. Chaboillez, and the people set off for the Assiniboine River. Sent 6 pactons of furs containing 545 kitts, 57 wolves, 4 foxes, 7 beaver, 5 bags of corn and a horse. I kept two of the Company's horses here, being so poor and sore backed that they were not able to go to the Fort. Made Morrison remain to take care of them.

---

(1) The French measure, then in use in the North-West, *une brasse*.

.....  
 .....  
 Hearing that there was a band of Indians hunting two days' 26th.  
 march off, sent Morrison to the Americans to fetch Charbonneau, The trade.  
 in order to go to them, as I hardly get a skin when the Hudson's  
 Bay trader is with me, as he understands and talks their lan-  
 guage and is known by all the Indians; my getting skins at the  
 Big Bellies since my arrival was owing to my having such  
 goods as pleased the Indians, i. e., strouds, capotries, iron works,  
 &c., which my opponent had not, but now that my trading  
 goods are such as he has likewise, he gets nearly the whole  
 trade.....

Last night some young men arrived with four horses which 1805,  
 they had stolen from the Assiniboines, (which had been stolen JANUARY  
 from them by the Assiniboines on the 18th of last month) among 6th.  
 which was one belonging to the Company but now, by Indian  
 law, belongs to him who risked his life in the stealing of him.  
 They offered him to me for something less than another would  
 have cost me. Being in want of horses I took him at the fol-  
 lowing price: 1 blanket, 1 casse-tête à calumet, 100 balls and  
 powder, 1 pair leggings, 1 lance, 1 knife, 1 hoe, 1 eyed dag, a  
 few beads.

The White Wolf, my landlord, also purchased two of his own  
 horses back again from the same young men.....  
 .....

.....  
 There has been no trade going on this long while, but it is 20th.  
 impossible to refrain making some small daily expenses, which,  
 though they appear nothing or next to nothing, run away with  
 more goods than is expected. Thinking on this to-day and  
 being anxious to know how I stood in my accounts, desired Mr.  
 McKenzie to take a general inventory of his returns and remain-  
 ing goods, intending to do so myself to-morrow, as the tending

of the horses prevented my doing so to-day. Captain Clarke upon being informed that I had to take care of the horses myself, and that they were in danger of being thieved, desired I would send them down, and that he would have them taken care of with his own.

My landlord went down to the Americans to get his gun mended; they have a very expert smith who is always employed making different things and working for the Indians, who are grown very fond of them, although they disliked them at first...

30th

Went down to the American Fort to get my compass put in order, the glass being broken and the needle not pointing due north, and to see how the horses were. Arrived there at 2 P. M. Fine weather.

Territorial  
claims of  
the U. S.

The Captains are busy making charts of the country through which they had passed, and delineating the Head of the Missouri according to the information they had from the Indians, who described a river as being four days march west of the last navigable part of the Missouri, which river, they say, is very large; and the Natives—whom they call "Snake Indians" or "Flat Heads"—who inhabit thereabout go, in a certain season of the year, to that river and live there entirely on fish. The course of that river, they say, is nearly south and has a placid current. The Captains make no doubt but that is a south branch of the Columbia or Ouragan River; I think it is the route they will take.

Having nothing to do at the lodge, I remained here a couple of days, being pressed to do so by the Captains. They took observations of the longitude and latitude of the place while I was with them and often since their arrival here.

They differ much from Mr. Thompson in the longitude of this place and say that Mr. Thompson has placed these villages and this part of the river a great deal too westerly, which they

think is the case with all his observations for the longitude. They observed, sometime ago, an eclipse of the Moon, which, they say, is an infallible rule for finding the exact longitude of a place. But they do not differ from him in the latitude.

They include in their territory as far north as River *Qui appelle*, for, as it was impossible for a line drawn west from the west end of *Lac des Bois* to strike the Mississippi, they make it run till it strikes its tributary waters, that is, the north branches of the Missouri and from thence to the Pacific, which could not have been done while Louisiana belonged to the French or Spanish, as those Powers would not have suffered England to give a country that did not belong to it, and, of course, a line drawn west would have stopped when it struck Spanish or French territory. Capt. Lewis fixed my compass very well, which took him a whole day.

.....  
 Preparing myself in snow shoes, &c., for going to the Fort, FEBRUARY.  
 despairing of the people's coming this winter, and being in absolute want of goods, not for these Indians, for the rascals do nothing, but for the Assiniboines who are upon this river and, to all appearances, loaded with furs, and who are going to the Fort only in the Spring.

Took an inventory of my remaining goods amounting to 45 $\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. The Return.  
 pluses, and delivered them to Mr. McKenzie. Bought a dog to carry our provisions on the voyage and paid him 20 rounds of ammunition, 1 knife, 1 awl, 13 china beads and a little vermilion. Set off with Morrison at sunset; walked five hours, and encamped in the plains.

.....  
 Set off at half after six; course, north 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  hours, when we stopped on a hill from whence we could see two large ranges of

hills between which we had passed, one bearing S. E. and the other S. W.; River *La Souris* right before us, north; a large hill, called "The Black hill" lying west of north of us. Crossed River *La Souris* at half after nine and proceeded due north; leaving the Black Hill to our right; camped at 5 o'clock in the plains without wood; we made some water with snow in a tin kettle on a fire of buffalo dung which we had trouble enough in gathering, the ground being covered with nine inches of snow.

Slept till 10 o'clock, but the wind and cold would not allow us to remain any longer, so we set off and walked till half past two in the morning when we laid down in a hollow to wait for day break, the moon being set and the weather cloudy.

10th.  
Severe  
cold.

Rose at day break and found ourselves buried in snow, it snowing very hard and blowing from the north west most violently, so that we could not see ten steps before us, on account of drifting snow. I froze the end of my finger, in belting my blanket round me in the morning. Luckily we had not untackled our dog over night, so that we were soon ready.

Walked as hard as we could all day, but the strength of the wind greatly impeded our progress and made us go about six miles east of our course, which was north. Crossed the deep ravine at 10 A. M., its course is south east. At sunset, despairing of finding the wood before dark on the course we were going, and the bad weather continuing, we struck for River *La Souris*, north by east, at which river we arrived at half past seven. There being no wood upon that part of the river, we again slept without fire, but found a great quantity of reeds and bulrushes in which we buried ourselves, and passed the night. Bad weather continues.

11th.

Set off at 6 A. M., following the south side of the river, but at some distance;—our course north;—arrived at the woods at 10 A. M., being the Elk Head, where we stopped to dry our shoes and refresh ourselves with a few ears of roasted corn, which

was all the provisions we had. The weather clearing up, we set off at 3 P.M., course north, the river running nearly the same course;—crossed the river and encamped in some Indian encampments.

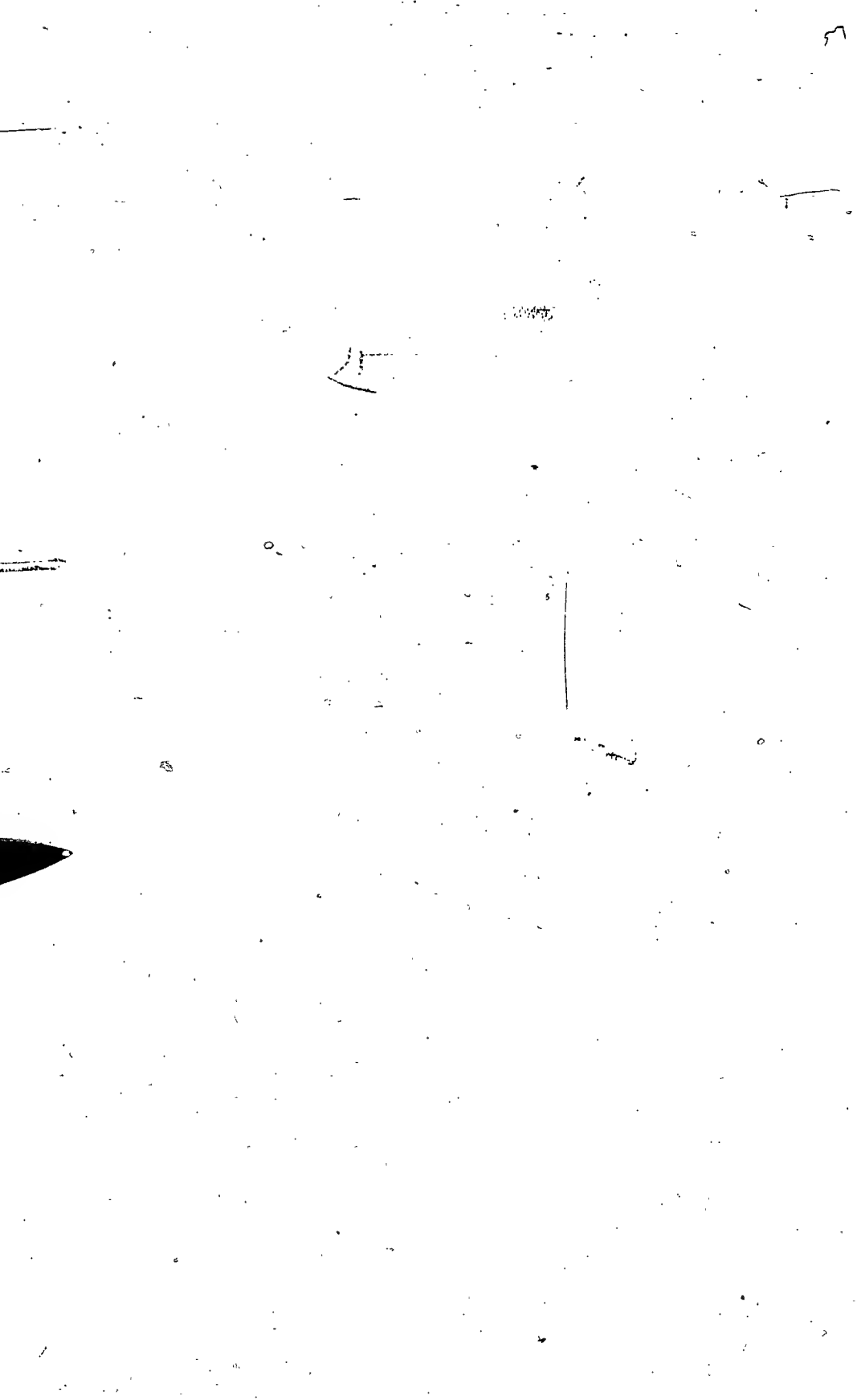
Set off at 3 A.M., following an Indian road which led to the <sup>12th</sup> Fort;—course west of north all day; River *La Souris* running parallel with us for about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles, when it gradually turned to the east. Crossed *Rivière aux Prunes* at 4 P.M.; passed my wintering house of last year at 6, and arrived at Fort Assiniboine at 8 P.M. Mr. Chaboillez, was absent, having gone to River Pain Binat. Heard the news of the death of Simon McTavish, Esq., and the joining of the two companies.

.....  
..... (1)

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(1) Mr. Larocque remained only a few days at Fort Assiniboine, then returned to the Missouri with the intention of extending his trading venture further to the west; see, "The Mississouri Indians", by Charles MacKenzie.





MR CHARLES MACKENZIE

THE  
MISSISSOURI INDIANS

A NARRATIVE OF

FOUR TRADING EXPEDITIONS

TO THE

MISSISSOURI

1804-1805-1806

FOR THE NORTH-WEST COMPANY



Mr. Charles MacKenzie joined the North-West Company as an apprentice clerk in 1803, and was immediately sent to the Missouri on several trading expeditions. This considerably developed his powers of observation, as shown by the account he has left us of these expeditions, but, unfortunately for him, they were attended with poor financial results for the Company.

Upon the abandonment of the Missouri trade, in 1807, it was his misfortune to be stationed in the region between Lakes *La Plue* and *Monontaggé*, a district thoroughly exhausted and where he had no opportunity of proving his undoubted abilities by means of good "returns," which were very often the chief recommendation for promotion.

Mr. Mackenzie was remarkably intelligent, painstaking and energetic, but of a rather philosophical turn of mind. He stoically accepted the position which had been imposed upon him and for which, especially after

the Union of 1821, there appeared to be no remedy, as the friends upon whom he might have relied had little influence with the Hudson Bay Company, whose servant he had become.

To those who advised him to leave the country he would answer, as he did to Mr. Roderic McKenzie, that he was too much accustomed to Indian life. "It does not require much to reconcile a civilized being to the Indian life, but a mighty task to reconcile an Indian to civilized life and thinking; there is nothing for me better than remaining where I am."

Like most old Nor-Westerners, Mr. MacKenzie cordially disliked the Hudson Bay Company. He had married an Indian woman who brought him several children, and he resented to the end the marked contempt with which that company treated all Natives. In one of his letters to Mr. R. McKenzie, written while suffering under the disadvantages he experienced in obtaining a position for his son—an intelligent young man who had gone through a complete course of studies at the Red River seminary, in 1840, and had obtained the highest testimonials from his professor,—he says: "It appears the present Concern has stamped the *Cain mark* upon all born in this country; neither education nor abilities serve them" . . . . . "The Honorable Company are unwilling to take Natives, even as apprentice clerks, and the favored few they do take can

never aspire to a higher status, be their education and capacity what they may".....

"There are now 60 or 70 boys in the Red River seminary, a dozen of whom are ready yearly to enter the service in the same capacity—if they can,—better educated than the Chief Factors".....

....."I do not see the use of so much Greek and Latin for these postmasters, since neither artificial nor natural acquirements are of any avail."

These postmasterships, necessarily of late creation, were intermediate positions in the Hudson Bay Company's service between the clerks—the "commissioned gentlemen"—and the men, and were generally given to educated half breeds.

Unlike the generality of Indian traders, Mr. MacKenzie had a most decided partiality for the Indians, of whom, on all occasions, he made himself the apologist. His correspondence on that subject, though it would by many be considered as extreme, denotes a man of a philanthropic disposition and of strong religious convictions.

He shared the belief of many in the North-West at that time that no sufficient efforts were made by his co-religionists to Christianize the Natives and, thereby, better their condition.

"There is a rage abroad," he wrote "for bringing barbarous nations under the pale of the Gospel, and in

No country more than in Great Britain. I doubt not but the two thirds of these are sincere, while, most certainly, the one third are interested from thirst of selfish gain.

“The Natives of Africa and Asia may well suppose that there is not a single heathen under either Great Britain or America, seeing so many missionaries and the zeal of these countries. It would surprise them to be told that there is a country under the British Government for upwards of 200 years, and a people with whom they carry on commerce and susceptible of every improvement, and yet no attempt was ever made to preach the Gospel among them. Nay, they are more degraded and degenerated than when the first European set his foot on American soil, the epoch of the setting Sun of its native inhabitants.

“There is every appearance of the quick extinction of the North American Indians, but no distant hope of improving their mind.....

“They think” (in England) “that being, as they say, “under the protection of the British Government” is enough.—What, in the name of Goodness, is that protection the British Government ever afforded the Natives of this country? Has not the British Government sold them to a monopoly?”

Mr. MacKenzie had considerable literary tastes and devoted most of his long and dreary leisure hours to

study, delighting especially in the history of his native land, the Highlands of Scotland.

His ambition was to leave the service of the Hudson Bay Company and to purchase "a patch of land" in the Red River settlement, which he did about 1846. He did not live long to enjoy the sweets of a quiet home. He died in March 1854 leaving three daughters, now dead, and a son, Mr. Hector MacKenzie, who still lives near Winnipeg.







FIRST EXPEDITION—1804.

The trading party meets with the "Lewis and Clarke" expedition.—The Americans disliked by the Natives.—The Mandans despise beaver hunting.—Kindness of the Natives.—The American officers—The Mandans, as husbandmen.—Alarm in the Mandan camp.

SECOND EXPEDITION—1805.

Cool reception by the Natives.—The Kind Old Chief.—Arrival of the Rocky Mountain, or *Corbeaux* Indians; grand festivities and speeches.—Difficulties with the *Corbeaux*; the Old Chief gets the "white men" out of trouble.—Mr. Laroque leaves for the Rocky Mountains.—Origin of the *Corbeaux*, or Crow Indians; their language.—Splendid harvest.—The return; sufferings in Prairies.

SUPPLEMENT TO SECOND EXPEDITION.

The Great Festival of the Sun; cruel follies and excesses.—Generosity of an Enasa chief.—Enasa hospitality.

THIRD EXPEDITION—1805.

A war party of the Missouri Indians.—Death of a runaway slave girl; cruel rejoicings.—Wholesale slaughter of buffalos.—Mr. MacKenzie is abandoned by his men.—Terrific snow storm in the prairie; great suffering.

## FOURTH EXPEDITION—1806.

The Hooping-cough among the Indians.—The Cheyenne peace expedition.—The Indian in his home ; his domineering pride.—What a “ White Chief ” is supposed to be.—Mr. MacKenzie accompanies “ Rattle Snake ” and leaves with the Cheyennes ; grand reception.—Mode of trading *en pipe*.—Unexpected arrival of Messrs. Chaboillez, Henry and Macdonell ; Great Men should be seen from a distance.—Grand visit of the Missouri Indians to the Cheyennes ; will it be peace or war ?—The return.

Nepigon, Spring, 1809.

Roderick MacKenzie, Esq,

Sir,

I promised at Camanistiquia to send you an account of the Missouri (1) Indians. This I delayed from time to time, until my friend, Mr. Haldane, induced me to select from my journal the extracts which will be handed to you by him with this letter.

I wish those extracts were better and more deserving of your acceptance. I am sensible that their greatest merit consists in their veracity, for I was an eye witness of most of the scenes which they expose.

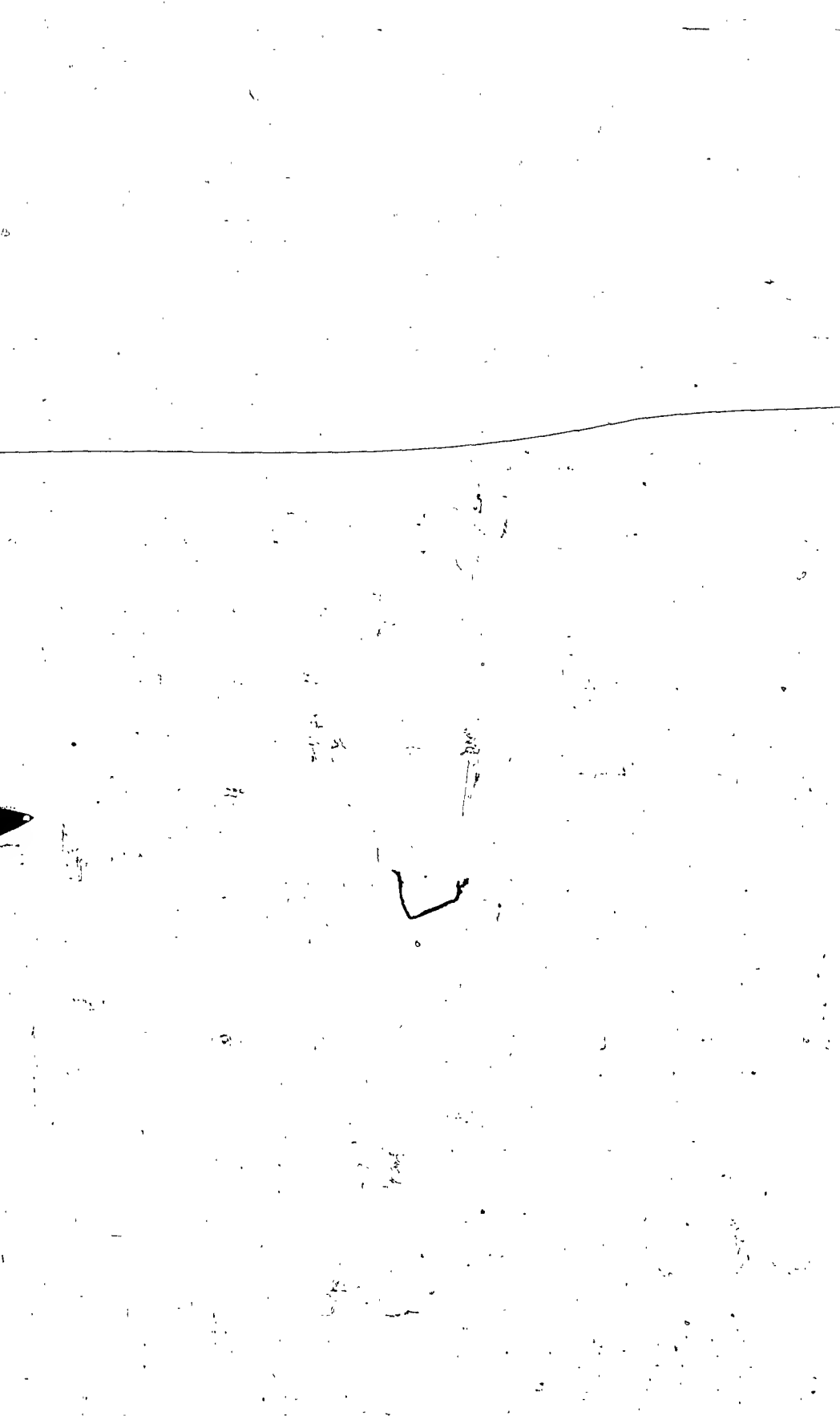
If the present specimen will please, I shall take delight in transcribing more passages for your perusal. Two motives encourage me in this desire: one is that I almost despair of ever having it in my power to testify sufficiently that grateful sense which I shall always entertain of your uniform kindness towards me; the other is, that, by reading these simple observations, you will be more able to judge whether my services, comparing them to those of others in my line, should not have recommended me to more attention in the scale of promotion than I have hitherto experienced.

I have, Sir, the honor to be,

Your very humble servant,

CHARLES MACKENZIE.

(1) The Missouri is called both "Mississippi" and sometimes "Missouri" by Mr. Charles Mackenzie. Sir Alexander Mackenzie says its proper name is "Mississippi."



## FIRST EXPEDITION

1804

The trading party meets with the "Lewis and Clarke" expedition.—The Americans disliked by the Natives.—The Mandans despise beaver hunting.—Kindness of the Natives.—The American officers.—The Mandans, as husbandmen.—Alarm in the Mandan camp.

In the Fall of 1804, Mr. Charles Chaboillez, (1) one of the partners of the North-West Company, then acting in the Department of the *Assiniboine River*, having agreed with his opponents in trade, that neither party should make any out-posts exceeding those already established, found himself with more men and goods than were necessary in that quarter. He therefore thought it expedient to send the overplus to the Mandan country which was beyond the limits of his agreement, and hired for that purpose a Free-man of the name of La France.—Being the only Frenchman who was acquainted with the *route*, and having been a Missouri trader for several years, this procured to him, on the present occasion, the treble appointments of guide, clerk, and interpreter, though I must own that he was very unequal to the discharge of either of these duties.

Matters being thus settled, we watched an opportunity to steal away from our opponents, on account of the trade, and from the Assiniboines, on account of their enmity to the Indians of the Missouri. At length, finding a fair opening, we took our departure.

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(1) Mr. Charles J. Btc. Chaboillez, see: "Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest" page, 81

Our party consisted of Mr. La Rocque, Mr. La France, four *voyageurs* (1) and myself. Four horses carried our assortment for the trade, and twice as many were assigned to carry ourselves, the whole in charge of Mr. La Rocque, a deserving young gentleman. As for myself, happening to be newly arrived in the Indian country, I was placed as an assistant to Mr. La France, who did not know how to write.

We proceeded; but to avoid the Natives we were obliged to lengthen our journey by taking a circuitous route, which conducted us through many extensive plains, most of which were in flames, as is generally the case at this season of the year.

In the course of a few days, we observed whole herds of buffaloes with their hair singed; some were blind, and half roasted carcasses strewed our way. We suffered great inconvenience through the scarcity of wood and water, and our horses were as badly off for water and food as we were. In this manner we joggled on until we came to the *Dog Lodge*, a remarkable place which the Sioux warriors often frequent in their hostile excursions.

After crossing this chain of mountains, we all of a sudden, heard the signal cry of Indians in a valley below us. I must acknowledge that we were not a little alarmed—but we continued our route determined to fight our way. On our approach, we discovered the Indians to be Assiniboines from *Rivière à la Souris*, one of the North-West Company's Establishments. After smoking the pipe and hearing the news, an Assiniboine, who had not taken any share in either, boldly laid hold of one of our horses. Mr. La Rocque without hesitation snatched the bridle out of the Indian's hand, then the Indian bent his bow to shoot the horse: at this moment one of our men leveled his piece,

(1) W. Morrison, Bte. Turenne, Alexis McKay, Joseph Azure. See: Mr. Larocque's journal.

and would have despatched the Indians had not Mr. La Rocque compelled him to desist.

Soon after this disagreeable interruption, a strong gust of wind, accompanied with sand and burnt dust, obscured the sky, and obliged us to seek shelter in a deep *Raveline* for the rest of the day. Our horses were left to graze close by; next morning three of them were missing. We looked in vain for them during two days, their tracks could be distinguished here and there but could not always be followed in the burnt plains, we therefore were obliged to abandon the pursuit, and gave them up as lost.

We proceeded on our journey; arriving within sight of the Missouri, the Natives flew in crowds to meet us, wishing us joy and congratulating themselves upon our appearance as traders amongst them. These were of the *Gros Ventres* nation.

Here we found four of the Hudson's Bay Company's servants, like ourselves on a trading expedition. They had arrived six days before, and informed us that, having lost their way, they had fallen in with a party of Assiniboines who detained them prisoners for seven days, and compelled them to pay handsomely for their liberty. This incident greatly diminished their stock for trade, but, expecting no opposition, they raised the value of the remainder and thereby entertained hopes of making ample amends for the loss sustained by the hostile Indians. However, the Mandanes had not entered into their views, and, finding our prices more moderate, we soon obtained the command of the whole of their furs.

Here, we also found a party of forty Americans, under the command of Captains Lewis and Clarke, exploring a passage by the Missouri to the Pacific Ocean. They came up the river in a boat of twenty oars, accompanied by two pirogues. Their fortifications for winter quarters were already complete. They had held a council with the Mandanes and distributed many



presents, but most of the chiefs did not accept of any from them.

Some time after, Captain Lewis, with three interpreters, paid a visit to the *Gros Ventres* village, and went directly to the *Serpent's Lodge*, where he passed the night. Next morning, he came to the village where I was, and observed to me that he was not very graciously received at the upper village. "I sent word ahead", said he, "to inform *La Belette, qui porte des cornes* that I intended to take up my quarters at his lodge, he returned for answer that "he was not at home". This conduct surprised me, it being common only among your English Lords, not to be "at home" when they did not wish to see strangers, but as I had felt no inclination of entering any house after being told the landlord would not be "at home", I looked out for another lodging, which I readily found".

After haranguing the Indians and explaining to them the purport of his expedition to the westward, several of them accepted of clothing; but, notwithstanding, they could not be reconciled to like these "strangers" as they called them.

"Had these Whites come amongst us," said the chiefs, "with charitable views they would have loaded their 'Great Boat' with necessaries. It is true they have ammunition, but they prefer throwing it away idly than sparing a shot of it to a poor Mandane."

The Indians admired the air gun, as it could discharge forty shots out of one load, but they dreaded the magic of the owners. "Had I these white warriors in the upper plains" said the *Gros Ventres* chief, "my young men on horseback would soon do for them, as they would do for so many "wolves," for" continued he, "there are only two sensible men among them, the worker of iron and the mender of guns."

The American gentlemen gave flags and medals to the chiefs on condition that they should not go to war unless the enemy

attacked them in their villages. Yet the Chief of the "Wolves," whose brother had been killed in the fall previous to our arrival, went soon after with a party of fifty men to revenge his death. Having not found the Blackfoot Indians, who were the aggressors, or rather having found them too numerous, the party wisely retraced their steps without making an attempt, but on their return, having found some Canadians, they killed four of them and raised their scalps which were disposed of in the course of their traffic to the Rocky Mountain Indians.

About Christmas, the buffaloes drew near the villages, and we lived on the fat of the land. Hunting and eating became the order of the day. Large parties who went daily in pursuit of the buffaloes often killed whole herds, but returned only with the tongues. The wolves feasted upon the carcasses, and, thereby becoming too heavy to make their escape, were easily overcome by the hunters of the ensuing day. The Indians in this quarter seldom use guns for buffaloes, wolves &c. ; for these they make use of arrows.

Beavers are plentiful, but the Indians will not take the trouble of attending to them. They often remarked to me that they would think it a pleasure to supply us with beavers if they could be secured the same as buffaloes by a chase on horseback, but they considered the operation of searching for them in the bowels of the earth, to satisfy the avarice of the Whites, not only troublesome, but very degrading "White people" said they "do not know how to live, they leave their houses in small parties, they risk their lives on the great waters, among strange nations, who will take them for enemies. What is the use of beaver? do they make gun-powder of them? Do they preserve them from sickness. Do they serve them beyond the grave?"

I remarked that the Northern nations were very industrious and great friends to the white people.—"We are no Slaves!"

rejoined the chief. "Our fathers were not Slaves! In my young days there were no white men, and we knew no wants; we were successful in war; our arrows were pointed with flint, our lances with stone and their wounds were mortal; our villages rejoiced when the men returned from war, for, of the scalps of our enemies, they brought many. The white people came, they brought with them some good, but they brought the small pox, and they brought evil liquors; the Indians since diminish and they are no longer happy."

In February our trading goods were nearly finished, and the few goods that still remained were laid aside for a hunting party who were absent since the Fall. Apprehensive that the Hudson Bay traders had an eye upon this party, Mr. La Rocque sent for one Charbonneau, who was with the American party as interpreter, in order to accompany us and to have the start of our troublesome neighbours.

Everything being ready for our departure, the difficulty now was how to set out unperceived by our opponents. Mr. La Rocque and I agreed in opinion that the best plan would be to drive their horses out of the way. With this view, we cautiously watched until the people of the village were asleep, then the horses were detached from their confinement and quietly conducted to a considerable distance in the plains, then, thinking all safe, we saddled our own horses; but our guide, who slept apart, could not be discovered.

This incident threw us into a grievous perplexity. I set out without him, accompanied by the interpreter and another Canadian, who also was attached to the American expedition. When we got to a certain distance, we waited for day light, in the meantime, we sent Charbonneau back for the guide, but he returned without him. He, however, learnt that the Hudson Bay traders missed their horses, were alarmed and employed Indians, who soon discovered and brought them back to the

owners, who, having found out our views, went by a different route.

Mortified at my disappointment, I resolved upon continuing my journey by means of the track of the other party, but a storm of drift and snow having obscured our horizon, we lost our way and were obliged to seek shelter under the banks of a small creek, where the severity of the weather detained us three days.

Here we found plenty of buffaloes, they did not mind our presence, and we killed four of them for the sake of their hides, which we required for shelter. A party of Indians who were upon a hunting excursion fell in with our encampment; I agreed with one of them and he conducted us to our destination, where we learnt that our opponents, who had been there, had taken their departure the day before our arrival, but the Indians, having had intelligence of our approach, reserved us a share of the trade. When we returned to the village, we found our friends greatly alarmed for our safety, fearing that we had lost our way, or that we were misled by the Natives:

We were now short of goods; a band of Indians, who were loaded with furs, were on the eve of arriving, and from this circumstance our opponents might have a decided advantage over us, and the idea cast a gloom upon our party. My landlord observing this change, felt uneasy and inquired whether he, or any of his family had given offence, I said, no, but that his tribe having apparently decided in favour of our opponents, we, of course, would withdraw ourselves, never to return.

This declaration distressed the old man. He took me by the hand,—“Do not go, do not abandon me, my son,” said he. “the Indians who are coming to-morrow will be kind to you; I will go with you to their village; your mother and your sister will join us, and we shall talk of you; the Indians love

" my family, and you shall have all their furs. Take courage, my son, quiet your mind and go to rest "

We followed this good man's advice. Next morning the old man was as good as his word; we paid a family visit to the Indians upon their arrival; his son presented them with the pipe, he himself went upon the top of a house and harangued in our favor, while his kind females were busily employed from place to place, collecting the skins until the whole was thus secured.

Two bands of Assiniboines of a hundred lodges each, who passed the winter at the Forks of the Little Missouri, sent daily to the villages to barter for corn, beans, &c. They were troublesome to us, but they advised Mr. La Rocque to send for an assortment in order to trade their hunt, but this measure required consideration.

The snow was too deep for horses, and, for the same reason, men would require snow shoes, the frames of which could easily be provided, but no one knew how to knit them. We were informed of an old man who used to talk of snow shoes, but this man was blind with age and therefore could not afford us any assistance. The old man remarked that in the days of his youth, he, in common with many others, made use of the like for walking, and could run with them, in those days, as fast as the horses run at present.

Having been disappointed in our expectations, we went to work ourselves, and made *raquettes* by passing thongs at right angles one across another, some thing like a riddle. In the evening, Mr. La Rocque, with the only man we then had remaining took their departure, accompanied by a dog to carry their provisions. The journey to the Fort and back again, we supposed might require at least twenty days to perform; I was in charge of all. The horses caused me much uneasiness, I was afraid the Indians might take a fancy to them, and carry them off.

Being now on the eve of spring, the snow began to thaw, the rills to run, and the Natives to cross their effects to their summer residence on the opposite banks of the Mississouri. Of this change, I was not aware at the departure of Mr. La Rocque, therefore no provision was made for it. To remove all the property was inconvenient; to remain with it after the departure of the Indians was dangerous; however, circumstances would only admit of the last alternative, and at length, I found myself reduced to the company and protection of my worthy landlord, who remained behind his friends merely to oblige me. He, notwithstanding, thought our situation very insecure and was consequently perpetually on his guard, being greatly in dread of the enemy.

In the day time, he repaired to the top of the highest hill in our neighbourhood; at night he could not sleep in peace and when he did slumber, it was always under arms. Seeing my hospitable friend in this continual state of alarm and anxiety, I began to feel uneasy and proposed to give communication of our apprehension to the American Gentlemen, who were stationed about nine miles from us.

The old man was highly pleased at my design, and he consented to remain about the following day, during my absence on this message, but the same evening Mr. LaRocque made his appearance, and the old man was happy; he fired away all his powder in demonstration of his joy.

Mr. La Rocque, notwithstanding great difficulties on the way and considerable sufferings, had been very expeditious, almost incredibly so, but he was disappointed, I may say doubly disappointed. The Indians who had induced him to make the journey traded the greatest part of their hunt to others in Mr. LaRocque's absence. Nor did he find Mr. Chaboillez at home, he was on a visit to Mr. Henry's, in Lower Red River.

Report was in circulation that the company of Sir Alexander MacKenzie had coalesced with the North-West Co. both forming but one concern. This was good news, for opposition of interest creates dreadful disturbances, both in means and morals, throughout these savage countries.

Notwithstanding the difficulty of procuring horses and other necessaries, our people, with those from Hudson Bay, and our returns were on the way home in less than four days after Mr. LaRocque's arrival. The Returns formed loads for seven horses.

Mr. La Rocque and I having nothing very particular claiming attention, we lived contentedly and became intimate with the gentlemen of the American expedition, who on all occasions seemed happy to see us, and always treated us with civility and kindness. It is true, Captain Lewis could not make himself agreeable to us. He could speak fluently and learnedly on all subjects, but his inveterate disposition against the British stained, at least in our eyes, all his eloquence. Captain Clarke was equally well informed, but his conversation was always pleasant, for he seemed to dislike giving offence unnecessarily.

The Missurip was free of ice the second of April, then the American gentlemen sent off their twenty oar boat, with ten men, for the United States, and, on the 8th following, the expedition proceeded up the river towards the Rocky Mountains. It consisted of one large *Pirogue* and seven small wooden canoes, containing the commanding officers, thirty men and a woman; the woman, who answered the purpose of wife to Charbonneau, was of the *Serpent* nation and lately taken a prisoner by a war party. She understood a little *Gros Ventres*, in which she had to converse with her husband, who was a Canadian and did not understand English. A mulatto, who spoke bad French and worse English, served as interpreter to the Captains, so that a single word to be understood by the party required to pass from the Natives to the woman, from

the woman to the husband, from the husband to the mulatto, from the mulatto to the captains.

I was once present when vocabularies were being made of the languages of the mandane villages; the two Frenchmen, who happened to be the medium of information, had warm disputes upon the meaning of every word that was taken down by the expedition. As the Indians could not well comprehend the intention of recording their words, they concluded that the Americans had a wicked design upon their country.

Buffaloes and other animals are in immense numbers destroyed every winter by the Missouri Indians. In stormy weather, whole droves run from the mountains and plains to seek shelter in the woods which form the margin of the Missouri; many of them, attempting to cross when the ice is weak, sink and are drowned, and, in the spring, both sides of the river are in several places covered with rotten carcasses and skeletons of buffaloes, elks, &c.

These dead animals, which often float down the current among the ice for hundred of miles, are preferred by the Natives to any other kind of food. When the skin is raised you will see the flesh of a greenish hue and ready to become alive at the least exposure to the sun, and so ripe and tender that very little boiling is required. The stench is absolutely intolerable, yet the soup made from it, which becomes bottle green, is reckoned delicious. So fond are the Mandanes of putrid meat that they bury animals whole in the winter for the consumption of the spring.

The water of the Mississourie, this spring, was uncommonly low, and in consequence drowned animals were not so very abundant as usual at the breaking up of navigation. However there were still plenty, and I had opportunity of observing the courage and dexterity of the young Mandanes among the floating ice, hauling ashore some scores of these nauseous carcasses,



while the women, as active as they, were securing all the drift wood within their reach for fire.

The Mandanes are excellent swimmers; I was no less surprised to see in the drift ice the men occasionally leap from one block to another, often falling between, plunging under, darting up elsewhere and securing themselves upon very slippery flakes; yet no serious accident happened. The women performed their part equally well; you would see them slip out of their leather smocks, despising danger, plunge into the troubled deep to secure their object. Nor did they seem to feel the smallest inconvenience from the presence of crowds who lined the beach. The men and women of this place do not think it necessary to sew fig leaves together to make themselves aprons, and they are not ashamed to appear naked in public.

Drift wood supplies the villages with fuel, which, as well as the timbers for their houses, is dragged home always by the women. Horses are never employed on these occasions.

Wood is scarce here, which is the cause that villages are often removed. A great quantity of dry and green wood is required every winter, the dry for fuel, the green for provender; a certain portion of poplar branches is provided for each horse, and the bark, which the horse clears off, is reckoned little inferior to oats.

In the spring, so soon as the weather and the state of the ground will permit, the women repair to the fields, when they cut the stalks of the Indian corn of the preceding year and drop new seed into the socket of the remaining roots. A small kind of pumpkins which are very productive they plant with a dibble, and raise the ground into hillocks the same as those about Indian corn. Their kidney beans they plant in the same manner.

They cultivate a tall kind of sun flower, the seed of which is reckoned good eating dry and pounded with fat and made into

balls of three or four ounces; they are found excellent for long journeys. One of these balls, with the addition of a few roots gathered occasionally in their way, is considered sufficient for a whole day. Warriors who generally travel great distances in quest of an enemy, and who dare not raise a smoke or fire a shot, for fear of discovery, find these balls useful, light, and convenient.

The only implement used among the Mandanes for the purpose of agriculture is a hoe made from the shoulder blade of a buffalo and which is ingrafted upon a short crooked handle. With this crooked instrument they work very expeditiously, and soon do all that is required for their supplies.

The men never trouble their heads about the labours of the field unless to reprimand the women for some noted neglect, and to sow a few squares of tobacco which, being a sacred plant, the women, who are considered unclean, must not interfere with, except in preparing the ground for its reception. The tobacco squares are carefully kept clear of weeds. The blossoms of this plant are cautiously collected and, dried in the sun, are reckoned the very best of tobacco. The plants do not exceed a foot in height; they resemble spinage and are dried the same as the flowers, then pounded and mixed with grease for use. This kind of tobacco is weak, tastes differently from ours, and the smell which the smoke emits is very disagreeable to strangers. I could not ascertain whence the Indians had that plant originally, but we must suppose it is from below, and that it found its way, the same as the horses did, from the Spaniards.

In due season, some men and horses arrived from the Assiniboine or Red river. We crossed to meet them at the Mandane Village, where we found the Indians in great alarm, having that morning discovered at the entrance of the village some strange arrows and an old shoe, insolent signals. The position of the enemy was anxiously looked for all day, in the ensuing

night several shots were heard. This created singing and dancing; drum beating and war hoops occupied all hands to the dawn of day, when the whole village moved forward to brave the enemy, but all the vestiges they found consisted only of a dead horse with five arrows through his body. From this incident it was inferred the number of the enemy did not exceed the number of arrows found in the horse; that these five were horse stealers, and that finding only one horse they could not make a division and therefore settled the business as is customary on such occasions, in this summary manner.

Mr. La Rocque having made the necessary preparations for our journey, we left the Missouri on the 2nd April and arrived at Assiniboine Fort on the 22nd May, where Chaboillez received us kindly, thanked us for our winter toil, and, as a token of his approbation, made each of us a present of a horse.

So ended my first trip to the Missouri; my next task will be to relate the observations made in my second expedition.

## SECOND EXPEDITION

1805

Cool reception by the Natives.—The kind Old Chief.—Arrival of the Rocky Mountain, or *Corbeaux* Indians; grand festivities; speeches.—Difficulties with the *Corbeaux*; the Old Chief gets the "White men" out of trouble.—Mr. Larocque leaves for the Rocky Mountains.—Origin of the *Corbeaux* or Crow Indians; their language.—Splendid harvest.—The return; sufferings in the prairies.

In the course of our first expedition to the Mississourie, having seen several Rocky Mountain Indians, we made inquiries regarding the state of their country, its trade &c. We learnt that beavers were as numerous in their rivers as buffaloes and other large animals were in their plains or meadows, which account was confirmed by an old voyageur lately from that quarter.

In consequence of this information, Mr. Chaboillez formed the plan of establishing trade with the Natives, and Mr. La Rocque was appointed to carry that plan into execution. I was ordered to accompany the expedition as far as the Mandanes.

On the 3rd of June all was ready, and we took our departure. The party consisted of Mr. La Rocque, Mr. La France, two voyageurs and myself, provided with thirteen horses.

Soon after, falling in with a large band of Assiniboines, we experienced some difficulty to get clear of them with our property in safety. It was the same band which pillaged the Hudson Bay party the preceding fall. The Chief, who was a rogue, we satisfied underhand and we escaped unhurt. We had scarcely arrived on the banks of the Missurie, when the *Gros Ventres* sent

canoes to ferry us over to their villages. Here we were surprised to find the whole of the inhabitants with blackened faces, and the young men singing and dancing round the place with a scalp.

We observed a great change in their dress, which in many instances consisted of articles foreign to these distant tribes, viz: Russia shirting trousers, swansdown vests, corduroy jackets, calico shirts, &c., all resembling canadian voyageurs clothing, from which we had reason to suspect that these people had successfully attacked some of the North-West Company's establishments.

We enquired repeatedly how they came by these fineries, but no one seemed inclined to inform us, all gave evasive answers. However, we at length discovered that a party had been to make war upon the Blackfeet Indians and killed those who were in possession of these articles. This in a manner confirmed our doubts.

By and by the truth came out, the Indians who had reaped no benefit from the spoils, through jealousy, divulged the secret. They reported that the Chief of the Wolves, with his young men, had recently returned from a war expedition in the Blackfeet country, where they killed several of the white people and carried away their effects, which were the same that we now observed worn in the village. We immediately spoke to the Chief of the Wolves, and he acknowledged the whole as follows:

“ The evening before the attack, observing some people at a considerable distance near the banks of the great North River, I thought we discovered the enemy and my heart was glad; We became impatient but we waited night to make our approach. Coming within a certain distance, hearing the drum beating, we delayed until all was silent, and it was the dawn of the morn when our young men fired on the tent whence we heard the drum.

" At the first discharge the persons who were within rushed out ; it was then I discovered our error, that our attack was on white men. I was sorry, but I could not prevail on the young men to cease firing and be wise. The white men fled to their canoes, and the young men carried away the things which were left in the camp. I did not kill any of the white men, but I did believe they were *Serpent* Indians, our enemies ; I am sorry they were your friends " .

By this discourse, we concluded that these Indians had killed some of our people on the south branch of the *Saskatchewan* river. The Indians of the village, perceiving by our countenances that we were acquainted with the outrage committed upon our friends, discontinued their rejoicings and the exhibition of their plunder.

My business being confined to the villages and their vicinity, I lost no time in adopting the necessary measures for securing the trade of that quarter. Mr. La Rocque, who was to ascend the Missouri on discovery, was opposed in his views by the Indians, who insisted upon his return to Red River without going any further on his expedition. They asserted that if the white people would extend their dealings to the Rocky Mountains, the Mandanes would thereby become great sufferers, as they not only would lose all the benefit which they had hitherto derived from their intercourse with these distant tribes, but that in measure as these tribes obtained arms, they would become independent and insolent in the extreme.

This remonstrance was made in a tone which could not fail to cause uneasiness to Mr. La Rocque and he was at a loss how to steer his course ; he therefore applied to the head chief, called the *Borgne*, who was then confined to bed, for advice. This chief is reckoned a very superior character. Mr. La Rocque exposed his difficulties ; he listened to them with attention, then made the following reply.

"My Son," said he, "were I in health when you arrived, you should have been quartered in my tent, and the Indians would have been more civil to you; but the Indians have no sense. The Chief of the white people wishes you to visit the Rocky Mountain and you shall visit them; when I shall be well, no one dare hinder you. The Indians call for goods, but they have already too many goods; I am angry at the Chief of the Wolves; he ought to be ashamed; he has abused the goodness of the white people; he offered me part of his plunder, but I declined his offers. Have patience! my son; lend a deaf ear to bad talk. I adopted a son among the Tribes of the mountain; he is a good man, and he is a great chief. He will soon be here, and you shall accompany him and be safe.

"But hearken to my words, my son; when the Mountain Indians arrive, be kind to them, they know not white men; you will hand them your pipe of ceremony; you will clothe the chief; you will give him a flag and a stem, and you will make him a present, for he is a great man. But I shall be well then, and I will assist you. Take courage! my son, but do not throw evil medicines among the Indians."

Mr. La Rocque, deriving confidence from these favorable professions of the "Great Chief," was much relieved from his anxiety, and he assured him that he would attend to his words, think of him hereafter as a father, and would be happy to see him at our Great Fort on the Assiniboine River. We then returned to our quarters. The Indians still persisted in plaguing us, but as we were successful in our application at head quarters, we had reason to think less of their importunities.

About the middle of June, the Rocky Mountain Indians made their appearance. They consisted of more than three hundred tents, and presented the handsomest sight that one could imagine; all on horseback, children of small size were lashed

to the saddle and those above the age of six could manage a horse. The women had wooden saddles, most of the men had none. There were a great many horses for the baggage and the whole, exceeding two thousand, covered a large space of ground and had the appearance of an army.

They halted on a rising ground behind the village, and, having formed a circle, the chief addressed them; they then descended full speed, rode through the village, exhibiting their dexterity in horsemanship in a thousand shapes. I was astonished to see their agility and address, and I do, believe they are the best riders in the world. They were dressed in leather and looked clean and neat; some wore beads and rings as ornaments. Their arms were bows and arrows, lances and round stones enclosed in leather and slung to a shank in the form of a whip; they make use of shields, and they have a few guns.

On the following day, the Missurie Indians, dressed in their best fineries, returned the compliment by a similar exhibition. These, having the advantage of residing in the vicinity of trading establishments, were better provided with necessaries and consequently had a more warlike appearance, but they were inferior in the management of their horses.

In the meantime, *Le Borgne* sent for us in order to introduce Mr. La Rocque to the Rocky Mountain Chief, whose name is *Nakesinia*, or Red Calf. When we offered to shake hands with this great man, he did not understand the intention and stood motionless until he was informed that shaking hands was the sign of friendship among white men; then he stretched forth both his hands to receive ours. *Le Borgne* said a great deal in favour of the Company, but he did not praise the Americans.

Mr. La Rocque's great pipe was handed round as a precious offering and each took a few whiffs; then Mr. La Rocque presented to the Red Calf a flag a stem, with some mercantile articles, and the Chief, to testify his sense of the obligation,



adopted Mr. La Rocque as Father and promised to respect and consider him as such for ever after.

*Les Gros Ventres* made the *Corbeaux* (for so the Rocky Mountain tribe was called) smoke the pipe of friendship, and, at the same time, laid before them a present consisting of two hundred guns, with one hundred rounds of ammunition for each, a hundred bushels of indian corn, a certain quantity of mercantile articles, such as kettles, axes, clothes, &c. The *Corbeaux* in return brought two hundred and fifty horses, large parcels of buffaloes robes, leather leggins, shirts, &c., &c.

This exchange of trading civilities took place dancing; when the dancing was over, the presents were distributed among the individuals in proportion to the value of the articles respectively furnished; this dance therefore is a rule of traffic. The Mandane villages exchanged similar civilities with the same tribe. It is incredible the great quantity of merchandise which the Missouri Indians have accumulated by intercourse with Indians that visit them from the vicinity of commercial establishments.

I traded a few things with the *Corbeaux*. Their beaver skins were badly dressed and split upon the back, in place of on the belly, a proof that they were not much acquainted with the importance of that favorite article of commerce. Afraid to ask too small a price, they seemed averse from dealing with me, for they would have a white man pay four times the value of a thing, or often let him go without.

When the *Corbeaux* Indians were on the eve of departure, the *Borgne* Chief sent word to Mr. Larocque to make ready, and join them. He immediately began to arrange his things for the journey. The *Gros Ventres*, perceiving the intention of the preparations, crowded into our quarters and threatened Mr. La Rocque with their displeasure, should he persist in his design. At this moment the Great Chief entered with a battle axe in his hand. Staring around him with an imperious air, he asked, in

a thundering tone, why so many Indians were assembled there?

They answered that they came to take their last farewell of the white men, who they expected never to see again.

"Why," said the Chief, with a sneer "should you feel so  
"so much concern if the white men are inclined to risk their  
"lives in a strange land; that is no business of yours; you  
"have warned them sufficiently of the danger, yet they will go  
"on." By this time the Indians, one by one, went sneaking out  
of the way. Then we accompanied the Chief, Mr. La Rocque  
leading his horse by the bridle.

When we entered the camp of the *Corbeaux*, we could perceive many of that tribe disapproved of Mr. La Rocque's intention, for some of them exclaimed "where are you going white men?  
"return, go home, we do not wish for your company; some of  
"our young men have no discretion; we are afraid." These insinuations had no effect on Mr. La Rocque's resolution, he was determined; but one of our party, a *Voyageur*, thought himself indisposed and applied for leave to remain with me. "I  
"see plainly the cause of your indisposition" said Mr. La-  
rocque; "Your courage fails you, like an old woman; you  
"may remain." This severe reprimand threw the fellow into a violent passion and he became extremely abusive. However, Mr. La Rocque took no particular notice of his conduct, for he could not punish so much insolence before so many strange Indians without risking the loss of their good opinion of him, and thereby the success of his expedition.

This unpleasant disagreement caused a bustle in the camp and most of the Indians collected round us. Finding this a favorable opportunity, the Great Chief and our friend *Le Borgne* addressed the strange Indians and his adopted son, the Red calf, as follows:

"My son, and my friends, rejoice!—White men are to visit  
"your land and you will feel easy in their company, but we,

“ shall regret their absence. White men are curious; they  
“ come from afar; they know much, and wish to learn more.  
“ They are three only of their party, your party are a thousand,  
“ and more! You see their skin, it is white; their hearts are as  
“ white as their skin; they are good and will do you no harm.  
“ Give them plenty to eat, let them have the best, and be first  
“ served.

“ Let your women be kind to them. Never ask anything from  
“ them, they are generous and they will pay you your kind-  
“ ness. White men love beaver, and they are continually in  
“ search of beaver for its skin. What use they make of the  
“ skin I know not, but they give us good things in return; they  
“ exchange it for guns, ammunition, &c.

“ Our fathers were not acquainted with white men; we live  
“ better than our fathers lived. Do your neighbours the *Serpent*  
“ nation enjoy the security and happiness we enjoy? If the  
“ white men could furnish them, as they furnish us, with arms,  
“ we should not then carry away so many of the *Serpent's*  
“ scalps.

“ The white men are powerful, they are like magic! there-  
“ fore I once more entreat you to protect with indulgence those  
“ I recommend. You, my son, must never let the young white  
“ chief out of your sight; go with him wherever he goes;  
“ should any misfortune happen to him, we shall be ashamed  
“ to meet white men.

“ This summer I mean to visit the Great White Chief at his  
“ fort; I shall tell him that his young friends are safe in charge  
“ of my son who is a great man, and the great chief of the white  
“ people will be kind to you. But I have heard some of the  
“ women, as I was passing through the camp, call out: “ return  
“ white men! go home! we are afraid!” Say, my friends, what  
“ means this”?

After a pause of some minutes an elderly man raising his voice, said : " We were suspicious of these white men ; we were afraid they might throw evil medicines among us and spoil our lands, but you have removed our fears, and you can depend upon our good behaviour. The *Corbeaux* are in two tribes, they have two chiefs. The Red Calf who receives favours from the white men, and the Red Fish who receives none ; it was the Red Fish that told us to be angry."

No sooner had the old man ceased speaking than the Red Calf addressed Mr. LaRocque, " Father," said he, " if you are willing to go with us, we are willing to receive you, but should an enemy stand in our way, or attack us in our journey, you and your young men must assist us in beating him off."

Mr. La Rocque said he would assist his friends on all occasions. Then *Le Borgne* made a harangue of great length and concluded by observing that his heart was full, and that he would be in a state of anxiety until the return of the white men.

My affairs requiring my presence in the villages I shook hands with my friend Mr. LaRocque and withdrew. *Le Borgne* has been of great service to us and, if his influence will accompany Mr. LaRoque in his journey, the Indians will be very careful not to give him any offence.

The men of the *Corbeaux* nation are generally of the middle size, inclining to corpulency, with fair complexion and a pleasant countenance. The women are handsome, but their beauty fades early, even children have grey hairs. The nation is in two tribes, *Kegh-chy-sa* and *Hey-re-ro-ka*, governed by two chiefs, the Red Calf and the Red Fish, and may muster about six hundred warriors ; they speak a dialect of the *Gros Ventres*.

The origin of the *Corbeaux* is accounted for in the following manner : Two brothers of the *Gros Ventres* named *Kegh-chy-sa*

and Hey-re-ro-ka were wicked men; they murdered numbers of their own relations and were, in consequence, obliged to fly for safety to the distant recesses of the Rocky Mountains, where, falling in with the Flat Heads, they provided themselves with wives. The offsprings of that connexion became a new tribe, speaking a new dialect which, being a mixture of the two others is understood by the three tribes. *Les Gros Ventres* call themselves "E-na-sa" and the *Corbeaux* "Kech-chy-sa" and "Hey-re-ro-ka," while the *Corbeaux* call the *Gros Ventres* "E-na-ta" and themselves "Keigh-chy-ta," "Hen-ne-no-ta." Most of the words in both languages begin the same, but end differently as follows:

GROS VENTRE.	CORBEAU.
Arrach Bugju urrach Baga.	Annach Bogu minnach Baga.
Elangé Bugjé urrach Baga.	Etangé Bugich minnach Baga.
Ma-pook-cha urrach Baga.	Ma-pook-ta Minnach Baga.
Aitché shibbisha urrach Baga.	Aitché jibbla minnach Baga.

The *Corbeaux* tribes cannot pronounce the letter "V", but the *Gros Ventres* speak *Corbeau* fluently.

All these tribes dress in the same manner; the men have long hair which trail to the ground, but to make it appear long they add horse hair by a cement of gum. They comb only the forehead and, for combs, they substitute porcupine tails. The women are careless about their hair which scarcely reaches the shoulders; to make it look fine they sometimes throw a little water over it.

The *Corbeaux* do not cut off joints of their fingers, nor slash their own flesh as the *Gros Ventres* do, but they are much addicted to an abominable crime, the crime of sodomy (1).

(1) Details unfit for publication.

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About the beginning of August, the free-men whom we had despatched on our arrival to our establishment on the Red River returned, and informed me that Mr. Alexander Henry had arrived from Fort William. Concluding that a change had taken place in our department, I became anxious for my departure:

After the Rocky Mountain Indians were gone, I had scarcely any occupation and saw little or nothing worthy of notice. Several bands of Assiniboines, Crees and *Sauteux* visited the villages, but nothing strange occurred.

I must not forget to mention that there was a fine harvest at the Missurie this season. I never witnessed anything equal in richness to the appearance of the fields. The stalks of the Indian corn were generally eight feet high, the leaves of the kidney beans were entirely covered with blossoms, promising abundance; the pumpkins were already gathered, cut into slices and dried in the sun ready for use.

On the 15th of August, I crossed the Missurie with seven horses; here I lost half a day waiting for my fellow traveller, Mr. Lafrance; he had three horses, but he gave me a very poor account of the property entrusted to his care, which did not realise half the value.

In the evening we left the banks of the Missurie; eight horses carried our returns; Lafrance led the van, I, in the rear, drove the horses after him. In this manner we jogged on, and no one can judge of the difficulties which we had to encounter but such as have travelled in the same route and with a like encumbrance, travelling from the break of day to dusk. Still our daily progress was small.

Our route was through plains or meadows so thickly covered with buffaloes that we were often under the necessity of frightening them out our way with gun powder, and we were

in constant dread of being overrun and crushed by them at night in our encampments. The flies were extremely troublesome and tormenting, and we had no means for fire but dry dung which burned like spunk. Provisions were supplied daily as required from the chase.

After leaving the buffaloe meadows a dreadful scarcity of water ensued. We had to alter our course and steer to a distant lake, where we went to encamp but, when we got there, we found the lake dry; however, we dug a pit which produced a kind of stinking liquid of which we all drank; it was salt and bitter, caused an inflammation of the mouth, left a disagreeable roughness in the throat and seemed rather to increase than diminish our thirst. Our horses also partook of this unsavory beverage. We passed the night under great uneasiness; next day, we continued our journey, but not a drop of water was to be found any where on our route, and our distress became unsupportable. Lafrance lost his patience and swore so much that he could swear no more; he gave the country ten thousand times to the devil. At length his eyes became dim and we believed that he was drawing near a serious crisis.

All at once our horses became so unruly that we could not manage them; we observed that they showed an inclination towards a hill which was close by. It struck me that they might have scented water in that direction, and I immediately ascended to the top of the hill when, to my great joy, I discovered a small pool of water at a small distance from me. Forgetting the distress of my fellow traveller through the excess of my own, I ran to the pool and drank plentifully, my horse plunged into it before I could muster time to prevent him. I then returned to the edge of the hill and beckoned to Lafrance, who was still at too great a distance to hear me. When he reached me at last, the poor man seemed more dead than alive, his countenance was entirely changed into a dark hue and a

thick scurf affected his mouth. He instantly got into the water, of which he partook so plentifully that I was fearful of the consequences. The horses also drank to excess and I was afraid they might be injured also.

After resting for some time in the vicinity of the water, we resumed our course, but did not proceed far when our recent extravagant libations began to tell both upon ourselves and upon our horses. Notwithstanding this, we thought prudent to return and pass the night at the same pool as we might have fared worse by continuing, and have been obliged to encamp without water.

Next morning at day break, we went on and that evening arrived at the Fort, where I found Mr. Henry in charge, he and his people in a state of starvation. We were welcome guests for we had plenty of provisions.

So ended my second expedition to the Missurie.



## SUPPLEMENT TO THE SECOND EXPEDITION

The Great Festival of the Sun; cruel follies and excesses.—  
Generosity of an Enasa Chief.—Enasa hospitality.

July 10th 1805.—To celebrate the Great Festival, all the old men of the Enasa village assembled at the lodge of the First Chief to appoint proper officers in order to keep the peace during the ceremonies.

11th. This morning at day break, an old man harangued through the village: soon after appeared twelve robust young men with their heads in bladders, bodies bare, painted half way with vermilion and half with white earth, the emblems of punishment and pardon united in the same person. These guardians of the peace entered into every lodge, giving instruction for good behaviour. The women were directed to go into the woods for branches to cover the Médecine lodge, while the men were occupied in dressing themselves.

When all were ready, the men walked into the lodge with their pipes and drums, the women went with kettles and dishes full of the best of things to prepare for the feast. At the door of the lodge, the vessels, were aired over a blasing fire made of certain hay or weeds selected for the occasion, and ample offerings were variously made to the Sun. When the eating part was over, the remainder of the day was joyfully passed in innocent recreation, such as smoking, dancing &c.

In the forenoon of the 12th, several young men placed themselves in a row on their bellies; an old man holding an arrow approached them and with the barb of it pierced a hole at the shoulder blades of each, through which he passed a pin of hard

wood about four inches long and half an inch thick. To this pin he fastened a cord of eight yards in length at the end of which were tied seven bulls' heads or more, according to the repute of the warrior. Such as had killed some of the enemy and taken scalps had a man's scull fixed to each breast and a scalp fastened a little below their eyes, with a cane in the right hand, to which also was fastened a scalp. But such as were less succesful in war were not distinguished by so many ornaments; they had not the honor of dragging so many bulls heads after them, and their canes, in lieu of human scalps, were graced only with eagle tails. These young warriors were entirely naked, but painted white.

When the old man had finished this first part, the young warriors started up and moved forward, but the bulls head which they trained having their horns entangled rendered their progress slow and painful. One, however, who was more loaded than any of the rest, rushed through the crowd, unmindful of all obstacles which stood in his way, and soon gained his destination in the Great Lodge, where he was received by a multitude of spectators with shouts of applause. The others would fain have followed the example, but their hearts failed them; they often leaned on their canes.

As the warriors arrived at the lodge, all the heads were thrown on a high beam, and their weight serving as a counterpoise raised the bearers from the ground. In this position they remained suspended like so many criminals upon a gibbet.

In the mean time, spectators of all sexes and sizes united in singing; dancing and beating their drums &c., while the old man approached the principal *Hero* and asked him what he was disposed to offer to the Sun, so that the Sun might continue to shine upon him with kindness: "I shall give to the Sun," said he "in order that he may shine upon me with kindness, two  
" strips of flesh from each of my arms, beginning at my shoulder

" blades and finishing at my wrists; I shall also give to the Sun one of my fingers, and shall allow you, moreover, to imprint with a red hot iron an emblem of the Sun upon my breast.

The same question was put to each of the others, who were fifteen in number, but they were much more moderate in their devotional donations. They contented themselves with giving a finger or a slice of flesh respectively.

The old man, who was provided with the necessary instruments for the execution of his duty, began his operations upon the boldest of the heroes. He began by cutting on the shoulder two circles from which he raised two strips in parallel lines down to the wrist, then the little finger of the right hand was cut off at the second joint, and then the bit of a bridle was introduced, red hot, and applied to the breast until the flesh in a large circle rose into a hard crust. All this time, the sufferer as well as his companions on trial were hanging suspended from the beam of the lodge by the cords through the incision in their shoulders, their feet at some distance from the ground and unable to stir during the operation. The noise of the spectators was very great; if the sufferers complained, they could not be heard.

As soon as each had undergone the pains he had imposed upon himself, he was relieved from his elevated station at the beam and allowed to return from where he came, still dragging his original *équipage* of heads, until he placed the whole where he found them, and where fit persons were stationed on purpose to untie and receive them.

When the wooden pins were taken out of the shoulders, an old woman sucked the blood from the wounds, which she stuffed with a preparation made with her teeth from a certain root for the purpose. Then the suffering *hero*, or whatever we may choose to call him, took his strips of flesh and his finger joint, placed them in a neat little bag, with which he hastened to the

outside of the village to depose it as an offering to his God, and singing a lamentable dirge as he went on.

Tired of so dreadful a scene, I withdrew and returned to my quarters, where I found the guards of police indulging with the girls during the absence of their parents. As to the warriors, the sun was high the next morning before the last of them left his companions stand at the beam to take his painful turn before the old priest.

The old priest was handsomely rewarded for his trouble and attendance, the young warriors on whom he operated so signally loaded him with presents, and, the next morning, he was one of the richest men in the village.

The Indians, as it is well known, are extremely attached to their children, and become inconsolable when they have the misfortune of losing any of them; such is their distress, that they throw away all their property, cut off joints of their fingers and commit a thousand extravagances; on the other hand, they are cruel enemies, and will go any length for revenge. Still there are surprising instances of generosity evinced among them. The following, in particular, deserves to be mentioned.

In the fall of 1804, a party of Enasas being in need went towards the Rocky Mountains in search of horses, which they determined to make their own, wherever found. After travelling several days in vain through extensive plains, they came to the foot of the Rocky Mountains and resolved upon crossing them. In a valley beyond the first range, they discovered a small camp of Flat-head or Snake Indians of four or five tents, which, in the following night, they approached. At day break next morning, the men of the camp mounted their horses and rode off for the chase. The warriors taking advantage of the absence of the men, fell upon the camp and destroyed all the women and children within their reach and carried away the property.

Looking out for horses among the rocks in the vicinity, they perceived in a small cave a woman making her escape with her two children, whom they pursued, but upon coming near, the chief was seized with compassion. The woman was beautiful, and he spared her life and that of her two children, made them all his captives and carried them off to the Missurie.

The hunters, on their return to the camp, finding the cruel ravages of an enemy during their absence, became distracted. The husband of the captive, not finding a vestige of them among the slain, searched for them among the rocks. He called his wife by her name; some of the other women who had the good fortune to escape the massacre, recognising his voice, flew from their hiding places and mingling their cries and tears with his, informed him that the enemy, who was then scarcely out of sight, after destroying the camp, had been looking out for the horses among the rocks and had discovered his wife and children, whom they carried away as slaves.

He immediately formed the bold and desperate resolution of pursuing the enemy, in hopes of an opportunity for retrieving his loss. His friends endeavoured to persuade him to the contrary, but he would not hearken to reason, and instantly departed. He soon came in sight of his enemies, watched night and day unperceived in their rear for more than a month without finding an opportunity, when, at length, he reached their village. The war chief, having by this time determined upon making his beautiful Captive his wife, applied to his father-in-law to adopt her as his daughter, by which means the children would be naturalized and considered of the *Endsa* nation.

The unfortunate husband now having lost all hopes of ever seeing or recovering his family by stealth, determined on sacrificing himself. He ascended to the top of a high hill which was

in the vicinity of the village, and boldly made his appearance, singing his death song.

The Enasas, seeing this stranger, became alarmed, thought he was a spy and that the enemy was at hand. The village assembled and consulted; the men armed and in a body ascended the hill. When within a small distance, the stranger, in a firm and loud voice, hailed them as follows:

“Enasa nation! You, who are the authors of my wretchedness, be not alarmed where there is no danger. You see me naked and alone; I have no arms; I am a Flat-Head; my friends are beyond the great mountains; they are in mourning, but I am not here out of revenge for their loss, I came for my wife and my children whom your young men have carried away captives. If they are your slaves, make me also your slave; if they are not among you, and are no more, let me go with them to the land of spirits.—There, Enasas, despatch me! I cannot live!—I am your enemy!”

Moved with compassion, the Enasas received the unfortunate stranger with kindness, conducted him to their village and not only returned him his wife and children, but also gave him four horses loaded with presents, and invited him to remain in the village as long as he pleased. He declined staying for any time, but assured them that the desire of his speedy return arose entirely from a sincere wish of testifying to his friends the happiness he enjoyed, and to make them as sensible as himself of the high value that ought to be placed upon the friendship of the Enasas.....

..... After these protestations of everlasting friendship, the Flat-Head, his wife and children took their departure, promising that he and his friends would pay the village a visit, the ensuing summer. He kept his word, for I was present, as already mentioned, when three hundred tents of Rocky Mountain Indians

made their appearance. It was then that I was acquainted with the preceding circumstances.

The Enasas make it a rule to protect all strangers from insult or injury while they remain within the limits of their villages; even the natural enemies of their own tribe are safe there. On this account, the Enasas villages have become a sanctuary for fugitives from all the neighbouring tribes, who go about fearlessly, speaking their respective languages. These strangers cannot, however, be accommodated with wives from among the nation, but must confine themselves to slaves or to women taken in war. Even the Mandans, who are neighbours, are treated as strangers in that respect.

Some of these strangers often make an ungrateful return; they often destroy their benefactors and fly to their own country with their scalps, and thereby obtain forgiveness for the offence which caused their banishment. Though the Enasas are sensible to this treachery from dire experience, they still encourage the perpetual presence of strangers, for they sometimes find it convenient to make use of them as interpreters to traffic with the many Indians who resort to that quarter in the summer season, and, sometimes, as ambassadors to distant nations, for arrangements of differences.

I happened to be acquainted with one of these strangers, who was of the Arriquira tribe and had lived with the Mandans several years. He was a handsome bold fellow, but a great rogue, and was the cause of much bloodshed to his protectors, who had employed him occasionally as an ambassador and whom he had been in the habit of betraying, by giving information to the enemy. In consequence, a consultation of the wise men took place and his death was determined, but none of the tribe were willing to execute the sentence.

Being thus embarrassed, they sent a deputation to the famous War Chief of the Enasas tribe to inform him of the teachery of

the Arriquirá Indian, of the sentence of the chiefs and the inability of the Mandan Indians to do it justice, at the same time insinuating a wish that he should favor them with his services on the occasion. He understood their drift and replied: "Is it true that the Mandans have not courage enough in their tribe to manage a bad dog, and must my hands be ever stained with the blood of their enemies! But since the safety of my friends the Mandans depends upon the strength of my arm and the boldness of my heart, this bad dog shall not see another day". At this, he started from his seat, laid hold of his battle axe and desired two of his young men to follow him.

Arrived at the Mandan village, he immediately entered the tent of the Arriquirá Indian; they talked familiarly together until the accused, perceiving the evening approach, got up and said it was time for him to look out for his horses.

The Enasa got up also and accompanied him, attended by his two young men, to the outside of the village, where there was a remarkably large stone. "Look here! comrade", said the Chief, "I dreamed last night that this stone was stained with your blood, and my dream must be fulfilled this evening. Go, however, go for your horses and pass here on your return; do not disappoint me, you know I can always find you, even in the center of your own nation". "If I should not pass here this evening with my horses", said the Arriquirá—"It will not be through the apprehension of danger from you, my friend", and he went his way. The Chief instructed his young men, and each took his station. When the Arriquirá Indian, on his return, came to the fatal stone, the Chief gave the signal and the young men shot the guilty Indian through the heart. The body was left to the wolves. The Great Chief returned home loaded with presents and praise.



## THIRD EXPEDITION

Fall of 1805.

A war party of the Missouri Indians—Death of a runaway slave girl; cruel rejoicings—Wholesale slaughter of buffalos—Mr. MacKenzie is abandoned by his men—Terrific snow storm in the prairies and great sufferings.

Mr. De Rocheblave, who succeeded Mr. Chaboillez in the Red River department as manager of the Company's concerns, did not approve of the Missouri trade, but, from the measure already taken, he was under the necessity of continuing that business for another season, and I was appointed to conduct it.

On the 18th November, to our great joy, our worthy friend Mr. Larocque and his party made their appearance from their visit to the Rocky Mountain.—It is not necessary that I should give the particulars of his journey, as Mr. Larocque himself has kept an account of it, I shall merely observe that he was disappointed in his expedition, suffered great hardships and took no less than thirty six days on his return to our establishment. He remained a short time with me at *Montagne à la Bosse*, the post I had in charge when I accompanied him to head quarters. Mr. de Rocheblave was relieved from much anxiety by his arrival and he received him with great kindness.

The arrival of Mr. Larocque in the Department having rendered my presence less necessary, matters were speedily arranged and I took my departure on the 24th November, on my expedition to the Missouri country. Three men and six horses accompanied me, with an assortment for the trade; but

no less than five other traders, forming as many different interests, had taken the lead of us for the same quarter.

When I arrived at the Missouri, my friend *Le Borgne* received me with open arms and conducted me to his tent but, finding the Hudson Bay traders there before me, I observed to the chief that they and I, having contrary objects in view, could not agree together. He offered to send them away, but knowing that his tent was not the most suitable to my purposes, I thought it more advisable to thank him for his good intentions, then went directly to my old landlord's tent, where I was cheerfully received and presented with a horse, in testimony of his friendship and countenance. Indeed, all the Indians seemed happy to see me again among them, which promised in my favor a decided advantage over my opponents.....

About this time the Missouri Indians, to the number of 350 warriors, under the influence of the False Horn Chief, went to war towards the Sioux country. After an absence of four days, the party returned. They met the enemy, gave them battle, which lasted for a whole day, killed and wounded many, and brought with them seven scalps; but their party suffered also, for it had one killed and seven wounded. On this occasion the Indians went through the usual ceremony of singing and dancing around the village with the new scalps, but the relatives of the unfortunate warriors turned all their own effects out of doors, and did not join in the rejoicings.

Next day, the people of our village went to the Mandan village to a dance. Their dance was entirely confined to the young women of the different villages, dressed in their leather smocks and finest ornaments. These females went around the village, dancing and singing the praise of the young victorious warriors. They received presents, which they did not carry away but left on the spot.

A servant of the Hudson Bay Company who happened to be present among the spectators, carried off, in the presence of his master, a fine horse and two buffaloe robes elegantly painted. I could not admire this conduct. As the white people were not at the war party, and had not furnished anything towards the dance, they certainly had no claim on the property it produced; which, I conceived, was given and abandoned from religious principles by the Natives, as a sacrifice.

The preceding night the noise was so great that I could not sleep a wink. Next day, all the villages having had their turn, I had reason to hope that the affair was ended, but I was greatly mistaken; they continued their merriment for a whole fortnight, when it was succeeded by another, which was derived from an incident of a most cruel nature.

A young man, brother to the Great Chief, sent for me to his lodge or tent. After exchanging the usual civilities, he observed that during my absence, in the summer, he had been at war.

"I killed," said he, "a *Serpent* chief, two young men, with several women and children. I saved a young slave and brought her here; I used her kindly, for I intended her for you, but, at the end of three days, she deserted in the night, and carried off a fine horse from my tent.—"Where did she go?" I said: "She went to her relations where she is arrived before now.

"This is the third time she was taken prisoner, and the third time she effected her escape. The former times, she carried nothing away but her own simple robe, but, this time, she is well dressed and has two knives. She is very pretty; none of our own women equal her; she is the greatest beauty of all the Indian tribes, and we know the White Man would love her, and would give a generous price for her. I saved her life on account of the White Man".

"I wish you had not been so merciful, my son," exclaimed an old woman; "I wish you had killed the b....., for she has stolen my knife, which I had for three winters; it was a good knife, only the handle was broken". "Yes," said a young girl from the opposite corner of the tent, "the bad slave has stolen my knife also; I wish she was dead!"

These wishes were not lost! A short time after, while the village was still in an uproar, rejoicing for their late success in war, four young men who had been employed in the pursuit of the flying beauty, appeared with her head at the end of a pole, which they planted in the door of the tent whence she had made her escape, and the horse she had stolen was delivered to the owner. They then retired in silence to their respective tents; nor did the men of the village heed their arrival, for they considered the head or scalp of a woman beneath their notice.

Not so the women; overjoyed at the spectacle, they collected around in great numbers dancing and turning it into ridicule. They pulled it by the hair from the pole, tossed it with their feet from tent to tent throughout the village, exclaiming. "There is the enemy: take care! be kind to her!" At length the head was consigned to the boys as a mark for their arrows

The men who went to look out for this unfortunate woman followed her track by means of marks she left where she dug up roots for her sustenance. When she reached the mountain, thinking herself beyond research and safe, she took her time, killed a buffalo with her bow and arrows, built a cabin of green branches and began to dry and prepare a stock of provisions for her journey across the mountains to her own country. The young men having lost her track, they wandered several days in the mountains, and it was on their return home that they accidentally fell in with her hut and despatched her by plunging lances into her bosom.

The winter being far advanced and considerable drifts of snow on the ground, thousands of buffaloes resorted to the vicinity of the villages. We had great pleasure in seeing the Indians go into the fields, surround and kill whole droves of them; the best parts only of the meat were taken home, the rest remaining to rot in the field. At times the Indians would congregate in great numbers and continue to drive large herds to the banks of the Missouri and, by gradual approaches, confine them into a narrow space where the ice was weakest, until, by their weight and pressure, large square of ice, some of fifty yards, would give away and vast numbers of animals were plunged into the river and carried by the current under the solid ice to a "mare" a little below, where they again emerged, floated and were received by crowds of women and children, provided with proper hooks and instruments to haul them on the ice, which, in a short time, became strewed with dead carcasses. Here they were left for some time to take flavor, then carried home and considered a great delicacy.

All the traders who were in opposition to me having despaired of any success, returned to the Red River and left me in the sole possession of the Mississourie trade. I now divided my assortment into small parcels, and made several outfits, which I placed under the charge of my men for the purpose of carrying on the business with the Natives to the best advantage; my success, generally, did not fall short of my expectations.

On the eve of my departure for home, the Black Cat, a Chief with whom some of my men had lodged in the Mandan village, sent me word by an Indian to call at his tent as soon as possible. This I did immediately and asked him the cause of so pressing an invitation. "Your white men", said he, "do not mean to return with you; they have disposed of their own private property in favor of the Indians and would have done the same with yours, but I knew that they were bad white men;

"they were dealing with bad women and I have secured your property". I thanked the Chief and then expressed a wish to cross in order to adopt steps for the punishment of these bad white men. "No" said the Chief, "that will cause difficulties, for the Indians are bound to protect all strangers." Seeing I could not do justice to my feelings without creating a disturbance, I had, with the assistance of the Indians, all my property transported to the upper village.

Two days after, I went down with Morrison to my deserted residence, saw my men, tried to persuade them to return to their duty, but they would not yield. I was therefore obliged to leave them and hire a free-man in their place. This was in the month of February and, the first fine weather, we took our leave of the Missurie. We had ten horses loaded with returns, including provisions.

The first day we travelled until dark in hopes of falling in with a good spot of grass for our horses, but the plains having been burnt in the fall and covered with buffaloes all winter, the whole country was as bare as the palm of the hand; scarcely a sprig of grass was to be seen in any direction. We encamped in a swamp of dry rushes, cleared a small space from snow, kindled a fire with small bits of dry wood provided for the purpose and, after eating corn cakes and drinking snow water, we laid down to rest. It snowed in the night and the air was raw, still we had a comfortable rest under the new fallen snow, which completely covered our beds.

In the morning, we discovered that seven of our horses were missing and could not be found in the vicinity of the camp. We, therefore, secured our baggage under the snow, mounted the three remaining horses and returned to the village. Here we learned that the missing horses were in the possession of an Indian who, on application, readily surrendered them. He gave us lodging for the night and treated us with great kindness.

Next morning, we set out early, found our baggage safe, loaded and continued our course until night came on, without seeing any appearance of wood for fire, nor grass for our horses. We found it, therefore, necessary to continue. I desired Morrison, who led the way, to guide his course by the North Star; the other man did not seem easy, he, however, did not complain, but soon after began to lag behind.

As we advanced in our journey, the snow became deeper and deeper; to pass over some heaps, we were at times obliged to unload, this made travelling, particularly at night, very unpleasant. About midnight, the sky darkened, the stars disappeared and a dreadful storm arose from the North. Having no stars to guide us, I desired Morrison to continue keeping the wind directly in his face and that I would endeavour to drive the horse after him. We had not advanced far in this manner when we heard the other man, Roy's voice from a distance in the rear. We, of course, waited his arrival; he complained of fatigue and indisposition, then threw himself down upon the snow *à corps perdu* exclaiming: "*Je ne partirai jamais d'ici, ni mort ni en vie*". We represented to him the critical situation we were in, and the very great danger we should run by stopping in the open plain, exposed without any shelter to the violence of the storm.

The poor man would not or could not hearken to reason. Seeing him in danger of losing his life if abandoned, I ordered the horses to be unloaded, and with the baggage we formed a rampart or screen as shelter against the storm. We then made a bed of buffalo robes upon which we placed the sick man who was motionless, and we feared he was gone or next thing to it. We rubbed his face, hands and feet, wrapped him in plenty of blankets, and in a short time we could perceive some symptoms of life. He was restored, but we suffered severely from the cold while attending him.

To secure the horses, we tied them to the baggage, then covered ourselves with the buffalo robes. Had it not been for that hardy and excellent man, Morrison, neither I nor Roy would have passed the night.....

In the morning, the snow was on a level with the top of our rampart, and so heavy above our buffalo robes that we had some difficulty to move under the load. Two of the horses broke their halters in the course of the night, but did not go far out of the way and Morrison soon got them back; the others were standing with the snow up to their bellies, their four feet close to one another, trembling with cold and their bridles frozen in their mouths. We however loaded them, and, having wrapped ourselves up in robes, we set out, but the drift and snow were so heavy that we could not see the distance of fifty yards.

With no marks to guide our steps, we kept on all day at random, but, by observing the direction of the wind, we endeavoured to keep the same direction. Towards the evening, the drift passing in separate columns, as it were, before the wind, gave us an opportunity of descrying at a distance the appearance of trees, to which we immediately repaired, and we came to a small creek with plenty of wood and water. I cannot describe my feelings on this occasion; my heart leaped with joy, nothing on earth could have given me more pleasure. We were provided to our satisfaction, but our horses, poor animals! were almost dead with cold, fatigue, and hunger. Having been four days without eating, they could scarcely muster strength to stand upon their legs. We procured for them the tops of trees of which they seemed to partake with good appetite.

The following day, we still had bad weather, but we remained in our camp until the afternoon, when the sky cleared and we discovered that we had considerably gone out of our course.



We now went on straight and got to *Rivière La Souris*, where the bad weather again detained us. The snow was very deep and fatiguing for the horses. Morrison made *traines* which did not avail us much. I despatched him a head to the Fort for assistance. Having come to a lake, we pierced the ice for water but, being shallow, we found it frozen to the bottom: we therefore collected ice into heaps and, wood being near, we lighted fire on the top of the heaps which, as they melted, made water for the horses who licked them for drink.

At length Morrison returned with men and dogs who took our baggage, I and one of the men took the horses in charge, but the horses unfortunately gave up and I was under the necessity of abandoning them. Next day, we got to the Fort, which was the twenty third from the Missurié. The desertion of my men at the Mandans, and the failure of the horses on the way home cast a cold on my reception. However, when my returns were examined and the horses were recovered, my expedition was thought more of and, in the end, I had no reason to complain.

## FOURTH EXPEDITION

1806

The hooping cough among the Indians.—The Cheyennes' peace expedition.—The Indian in his home; his domineering pride.—What a White Chief is supposed to be.—Mr. Mackenzie accompanies "Rattle-snake" and leaves with the Cheyennes; grand reception.—Mode of trading "*en pipe*".—Unexpected arrival of Messrs. Chabouillez, Henry and Macdonel.—Great men should be seen from a distance.—Grand visit of the Missouri Indians to the Cheyennes.—Will it be peace or war?—The return.

Previous to the departure of Mr. de Rocheblave for the Headquarters of the North West Company on Lake Superior, Mr. Caldwell and I had orders to visit the Missurie, as usual, for the purposes of trade. We accordingly set out on the 4th of June, accompanied by a freeman, with six horses belonging to the Company.

To avoid the danger of falling in with war parties and strange Indians, we went by a round about way and arrived on the banks of the Missurie without any accident. The country looked beautiful at this season, but the Natives looked more gloomy than usual, owing, we soon learned, to the recent loss of some of their young men, killed in a war expedition, and to the absence of a party of about 600 warriors, who had gone to revenge that loss.

The hooping cough, moreover, was then raging throughout the country and had already carried away 130 persons, old and young, in less than a month. The aged who were attacked by

this disorder met with little attention and were soon carried away. The attention paid to children was, however, very great. It was not a strange thing to see two or three dead in one lodge, the bodies remaining there unburied until the stench became so great that the survivors were compelled to remove them.

The disease began to slaken soon after our arrival and, the warriors having returned successful, the lamentations ceased. The war party, who were absent two months, returned in triumph with three scalps! War parties generally content themselves with attacking the first enemy they meet, and return as soon as they have killed and drawn blood, thinking themselves entitled to equal laurels and equal honors whether the contest was severe or easy. This war party paraded the villages for several days, singing and dancing, with the scalps at the end of long poles. Many of the sick joined in the rejoicings and we had to do the same, *car avec les loups il faut hurler!*"

I believe that whoever has studied the Indians and the nature of their passions, must have been struck with their versatility. Their whole life is a life of extremes. No being can bear with more fortitude a wound inflicted at war, but should they cut their feet accidentally with an axe, should they fall sick, they are quite the reverse. They are indolent, capricious, contemptuous, revengeful and domineering to the extreme, and yet their passions do not seem to disturb the quiet of their mind, which almost always appears regular and calm.

It is when they return from the chase that their predominant passion, domineering pride, has its complete sway. It is then a stranger can see how an Indian is respected in his own hut. He no sooner appears but every one hurries to clear his way less his feet should be entangled on his entering; every work is abandoned, every appearance of mirth disappears, no one dares salute him or even look at him in the face.

After having put by his weapons, he will seat himself on his hams before a blazing fire with a great composure and air of dignity. The most slavish of his women (they have in general more than one) will approach him and take off his shoes and leggins, while another brings him water to drink and a third prepares his meal, which he devours without saying a word. All wish to know of his good or bad luck, but no one dare make an enquiry.

My Lord being now satiated and his first pipe smoked nearly to the bottom, he will, in a solemn and low tone, begin to relate the adventures of the day. If successful, he will tell the women where they may find the animals, with every detail relating to the chase. If not successful, he will blame the women for not having paid sufficient attention to his commands; he is sure that they have given certain bones to the dogs, &c., he has had bad dreams the night before; he has, in the morning, met with certain birds and insects; he could not expect success after such negligence, so many bad omens. He never thinks of blaming himself for his bad success.

But, to return to business; on any arrival, I found that some of the freemen to whom I had given goods on credit the preceding winter had made a good hunt towards the upper part of the Missourie. These men paid what they owed, and traded a quantity of furs which they had over and above. The Indians were equally successful, so that my stock of merchandis was soon disposed of to advantage, but an appointment I had made with a Canadian sent from the fort to deal with the Pawnee nation detained me for a longer period than I expected.

About this time, a band of Shawyens or Chawyens came to offer terms of peace to the *Gros Ventres* and *Mandans*. They were received with great seeming friendship and handsomely entertained for several days. At their departure, they were assured of the peaceful dispositions of the villages and, as a

token of friendship, they promised that a young man taken in war some years before and then a prisoner, would be given up to his father whenever he should come for him.

Soon after, the father appeared accompanied by a number of young men. They brought a message from their Great Chief inviting in the warmest terms a young Chief he had noticed in battle, to pay him a visit. The young man who was also a great Chief among the *Gros Ventres* and renowned for his exploits at war, was willing to accept the invitations, but the majority of his people, fearing treachery, opposed his departure. Many councils were held on this occasion but all to no avail. "Rattle Snake", fearing that his character would be attacked by those who envied him, and that his courage would be doubted by his enemies, resolved to conquer all opposition and finally carried his point.

I resided in the Borgue's tent; it was there that all strangers paid their first visit, and that all the wise men assembled on great occasions. I consequently had a good opportunity of learning what was going on.

All strangers treated me with the greatest kindness; those who never had seen a white man looked upon me with great admiration and curiosity; many were afraid to approach me, but most of them were, by far, too inquisitive and wished to ascertain if I was in every respect the same as Indians. The Shawyens had seen and traded with several white people, though they had no traders on their lands; they were very friendly to me as I could understand them and be understood by the common signs of the Plain Indians.

They strongly pressed me to go with them, saying that they would load two horses for me with beaver. The remainder of my goods was not worth £5—and that of very inferior quality—and I knew that they would bring a far better price at the Shawyens than they would at the Missurie. I therefore resolved

to accompany Rattle Snake, to the great annoyance of the *Gros Ventres*, who would not hear of my going there with goods, but concealed their real motives under pretense of my personal safety.

I showed them the goods I intended to take with me, after having divided them in two, and told them I would leave Mr. Caldwell one half to trade with them in my absence. "It is not the goods we want", said they, "but if you should be killed, the Chief of the White people will never send another here". I told them that if they did not let me go I would never come to them again. The council broke up and several came back with buffaloe robes which I would not trade.

The *Borgne*, who was my landlord, with the greatest chiefs asked me what we did with beaver, and was much surprised that people who possessed every good thing which the mind could imagine, would come so far from their native land for beaver. "It is true," said I, "we have many good things, but we have no beaver." After a hearty laugh from the *Borgne* and his smokers, I told them with what contempt the Chief of the White people would look upon me if I did not go to the Shawyens. "Who will tell him," said they, "that the Shawyens have beaver?" I replied that he was a man who knew every thing, and that he would be very angry with my father—for so I called the *Borgne*—if he prevented me from going. "If that be the case, my son, you shall have full liberty to go to-morrow morning; but should you be killed, tell your Chief before you go not to blame me."

He then got up with great composure, took his sacred pipe and stem, which he lighted and, after making the four elements smoke, he pointed the stem towards the fort and began haranguing the chief of the white people not to be irritated, telling him how often he had served him and his white people. When done, he said, "Since you say that my comrade, my equal"—

for so he called Mr. Chabouillez—"knows every thing, he must "have heard me and must know that my heart is good". Then they began to make conjectures concerning the Chief of the Whites, of his manly strength, of his might and power, of his stature and bulk and, above all, of his dress and weapons. A man who has so much scarlet cloth to give for beaver cannot fail being dressed in scarlet himself. In short, they formed a high idea of his outward appearance which I soon had every reason to regret.

The *Borgne* procured me a young man to assist me on the way and I left the village at dawn to join Rattle Snake and his party. I took three of the Company's horses, one for myself, one to carry the goods and, the third for my young man. Going through the villages, I heard everybody calling me a fool—the women were afraid I should never come back. At last, Rattle Snake and twelve young scamps like himself came out of the village and, after having joined ten Shawyans, we started. A party of Mandans having overtaken us, we were now a party of about forty:

Among the Mandans there was a person named Gisson, free-man (1) whom I have had occasion to mention before and who had received credits from the North-West Company. He informed me that he was going to the Shawyans, *en pipe* and he was sure of being better received and get more than by trading the few articles he had, and that, moreover, it was the custom of those Indians who knew nothing about trade. "I suppose", said he, "that you intend to push them a *pipe*". I told him I knew nothing about *pipes*, and if really they knew nothing about trade I would get a better bargain. "They will laugh

(1) Mr. René Jussomme or Jucianne had resided in the Missouri country as an independent trader for over fifteen years. He served as guide and interpreter to Mr. David Thompson in his voyage of exploration of 1797.—Lindsey, "A Report on the Boundaries of Ontario."

"at you" was his answer. He told me he intended putting his horse, his gun, a fathom of cloth, 100 balls and powder and a large axe upon his *pipe*.

At night Rattle Snake and his young men became rather anxious and questioned me about what I would do if we were to meet with enemies, or be attacked by the Shawyens; I told them that if we met enemies, I would follow their example, as to the Shawyens there was no danger. "But we have no ammunition, said the chief, will you give us some in case we should see enemies." "By all means," said I, "when I see danger." "You will better give each of us some now" said the chief; I refused. "Well," said he, "you shall turn back to-morrow with some of the others who are going back." I told them that I would not, even were the whole of them to turn back; that I would follow the Shawyens.

They all said the white man was a fool, and became very troublesome, asking for vermilion and tobacco. I, at last, told the chief that he had promised my father, the Borgne, to take care of me and that I did not expect such treatment. This had the desired effect, for they never troubled me again.

On the second day, several of the *Gros Ventres* began to drop behind so that at night only six, with the Chief, remained. We continued our route for four days through extensive plains without meeting with any obstacles and subjected only to a few false alarms. We crossed three large rivers with very strong currents, viz: The Clear Water River, Heart River, *la Rivière aux Boutets*. No wood was to be seen, except a few clusters of poplar here and there along the banks of these rivers.

The country is most plentifully stocked; immense herds of buffaloes could be seen at midday quenching their thirst at these rivers and reposing on their banks. Beavers—which are here in great plenty—reigned undisturbed, for nothing seemed



to make war upon them. Nor were the banks of the rivers confined to the buffaloe alone ; there were numerous flocks of red and fallow deer, the most of which, in the height of the day, were lying on the sides of the hills, while others were on the watch sniffing the fresh breeze while their companions indulged in a watchful slumber. There were also several muddy creeks, with a little water here and there, which the beavers had conserved by stopping the course of the outlets.

The fifth night, being within twelve miles of the Shawyens' camp, there were many preparations to make, more indeed than I think worth while to explain. The Rattle Snake and Mr. Gissom each took their pipe and filled it with all the ceremonies which superstition could invent, then cutting a green branch of choke cherry and passing it through a piece of fat dried meal, they planted it in the ground close to each pipe. This being done, there was a deep silence for some minutes, when Rattle Snake burst out in a kind of lamentation which lasted for a quarter of an hour, and was chorussed at the end by the others in a heavy murmur, as thanksgiving. The Rattle Snake gave his pipe to a ~~red~~ who sat alongside of him, who, after simulating to make the four elements smoke, without even lighting the pipe, made a very hearty harangue in which he mentioned all the feats the Rattle Snake had accomplished, and implored the pity and assistance of all the living animals, fowls and insects.

All these ceremonies being over and the pipe and green branch carefully put by, Mr. Gissom was desired to go through the same ceremony, but he declined making the lamentation saying that he would act like Father of all the white people,—meaning the King—when he made peace with his children. After making a grim face, he hung down his head in deep meditation ; at this I was obliged to leave the fireside for laughter and did not come back till I heard the hoarse murmur of all the listeners.

When I came back the pipe was in the hand of a Mandan who was questioning Mr. Gissom about his belief. Gissom told him to make the Rising Sun smoke and to implore the pity of a certain Being who can dispose of life according to his will and pleasure, and who was wont to assist every white man in distress; that he never killed a man; that his main aim was to do good; that he lived in fraternal love with every being, whether white people or Indians.

The Mandan, having, as it were, collected the different heads of his belief and actions, commenced a very long harangue almost in the following words:

“Hoo-ho-hoo! Smoke thou bright son of the East, and thou Great Being who disposeth of the white peoples life at thy pleasure. Do thou not despise me, though I know thee not. I implore not thy assistance for myself but for the aid of one of thy own people whom thou didst assist on former occasions. But should this Being's power be deficient, I implore all the animals of the Mandans to assist.

“It is not to aid the warriors I call ye; no, it is to pity and do charity to a good sort of man who lives like a Mandan, to whom he brings tobacco to smoke, powder, balls, guns, kettles, axes, blankets, cloth and knives to cut our vitals, awls to make our shoes, with every thing else that is good. Hooée! great bull of the meadow, be thou there with thy white cow;—sagacious wolf, be thou there;—ye bears and cats, be ye there;—ye eagles and ravens be ye there—ye monsters of the hill, be ye there with your claps of thunder and fire. Thou, great serpent of the bitter sting, be thou there and do not come alone,—but bring all thy slaves to thy aid” .....

Thus he continued for a long time, greeting everything that his wild imagination made more frightful than they really were to aid Mr. Gissom in pushing the pipe to the Shawyens, and if I have erred in this harangue from the beginning of these cere-

monies, it is by omitting a thousand absurdities which they committed in words and deeds, nor would I have mentioned any of these absurdities which I was so accustomed to hear every day, even by children, were it not to show how soon a civilized being reconciles himself to savage life.....

The next morning, the sixth of our march, two young Shawyens started very early to inform the camp of our approach and we began our slow pace with Rattle Snake and Mr. Gissom, each with his pipe in one hand and the branch of choke cherry, with the fat meat on, in the other, walking before us and singing a lamentable song. The branch and meat were an emblem of peace and plenty, and the pipe, of social union.

Many were the ceremonies which we were obliged to observe; at length, we saw several horsemen coming full speed before us and who, on coming to the pipe bearers, stopped short. Rattle Snake, followed by Mr. Gissom, with an humble step and down cast eyes went up to them and held them the pipe from which each Shawyen seemed to draw three whiffs, and then claped their hands on their breasts as if saying "it did my heart good".

In this manner they served every one we met with till the Chief arrived with about two hundred horsemen in his suite. The chief was mounted on a milk-white horse and dressed in his war dress and haranguing the Shawyens as he was coming along.

His followers passed on our right hand and came up behind us, when the chief called out to us to make a general halt. He came down from his horse and embraced Rattle Snake, then, stripping himself as naked as he was the day he came to the world, he clothed Rattle Snake with his flashy war dress and, with the assistance of others, mounted him on his white horse. This done, the chief, quite naked, led the horse by the tether to the camp, six miles off, carrying the pipe in his right hand

and the stem pointed towards the camp, singing or lamenting all the way in a language none of us could understand, if there were any thing in it to be understood.

N. B.—Some nation have the custom of carrying the ambassador of a neighbouring nation into their camp on their shoulders, but more frequently on a blanket or a fathom of cloth, and, if they have none, on a buffalo robe between four men.

Mr. Gissom followed them without the least notice being taken of him; all the others, as well as myself followed behind. I drew the attention of the curious and was surrounded by many old and young who treated me with apparent kindness.

At last we got sight of the camp pitched on an elevated spot on the north bank of a beautiful river. The leather tents, to the number of 220, were pitched in a circle covering a space of six acres. On entering the camp, I was conducted by one of their chiefs to his tent, having been recommended to him by the *Borgne*, through the medium of the other *Shawyent*. I was actually looked upon as the *Borgne's* son, though they knew I was a white man.

My host, after giving me to eat of the best which his lodge and the camp could afford, made a long harangue commanding those who had furs to come and trade them with the son of the *Gros Ventres* chief, which they readily obeyed, so that before sunset I had not a single article remaining, nor had they any thing to trade except buffaloe skins which, being well garnished, they kept. However, I sold the few articles I had to advantage, having got about a hundred weight of beaver, four of the finest bear skins I ever had seen, with some fine buffaloe robes.

My furs being tied up, I went to see Mr. Gissom and found him very pensive sitting in a lodge and smoking his pipe. I enquired about his success and he told me it was less than he had a right to expect but that I was the cause of it, "for," said he, "they were bringing me furs very fast when you sent a man

“through camp haranguing that you would pay high prices for their beaver, and those who had some in their hands to throw on my pipe turned on their heels and went to you with them and since that time I got only few robes. So,” continued he, “for my gun, cloth, ammunition and horse I got an inferior horse to the one I had given, three beaver skins and six buffaloe robes.” “Had I placed myself in their power as you wished me to have done, I would not have a fourth of what I have at present,” said I, “and I told you all along that you would be the loser.” But he said. “*Il faut faire comme cela pour être considéré par les Sauvages.*”

The *Gros Ventres* were much caressed by the Shawyens and we all agreed to remain six days with them on condition that they would come and camp half way to the Missurie, and that a free intercourse should be between them and the Missurie Indians for the remainder of the season. These six days I past with the greatest pleasure that Savage life could afford..... At length we took our departure accompanied by some of the Shawyens, who were to invite the *Gros Ventres* and the Mandans and especially the *Borgne*, for whom they had the skin of a white buffaloe, which, to a *Gros Ventre*, is too tempting an article to refuse, for when a man has a white buffaloe robe, his fortune is made.

On the third day, we got to the village where I found Mr. Caldwell very anxious for my return. The time fixed for our return having expired, they thought we had been all destroyed. After many councils held, the *Borgne* consented to go to the Shawyens with some of his young men and, if he found that they were not fond of their horses—to use his own expression—that he would send for the *Gros Ventres* to trade horses for European goods.

I gave a few articles to the *Borgne* to trade a horse for me, having already the load of the six horses I brought from the

Fort, besides my expectation that the free-man who was trading at the Pawnees would come and pay his debts. The *Borgne* having left, I prepared for my voyage to the Fort.

Mr. Caldwell and myself were thus occupied on a fine day when, of a sudden, I heard my name called at the door of the lodge by a voice which was familiar, and enquiring if I was within. I hastened to the door, dressed as I was in the Indian costume, and was much surprised at seeing Mr. Charles Chaboillez (1), Mr. Alexander Henry and Mr. Allen Macdonel, accompanied by three men.

Their first salutation was a reproach at my dress, which I found at all time most convenient in an Indian lodge, very light and cool in the warm season. Let any man living with the Indians take the idea of "Savage" from his mind and he will find their dress much more convenient. He can pass through the crowd, day and night, without exciting curiosity or draw a throng of children and barking dogs. It was for this reason that I wore the Indian dress while in their village and with no intent of adopting their manners.

Having announced the eminence of these strangers, the news ran through the village like shot. Many, incited by Indian hospitality, came with the best their humble huts could afford, such as fresh and dried fruit, sweet corn prepared in different manners, green pumpkins and beans, meats green and dried, while others thronged in by mere curiosity to see the North Chiefs of whom they had heard so much, and had formed such romantic ideas, while at a distance. For the sake of Mr. Chaboillez and Mr. Henry's characters I gave a bit of tobacco to those who brought them to eat; though it was less than they expected on that occasion, they said nothing.

The chiefs, who were bolder, began to question me concerning the dignity and influence of these strangers and their motives

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(1) The son of Mr. Charles J. Bte Chaboillez. See: "*Esquisse historique*."

for coming to the Missurie. I told them they came to buy horses and were curious to know the country. I endeavoured to force upon them that respect due to such personages by launching out in their praise and eminence, but in vain; the Indians saw nothing in their mien or dress that would command their respect, much less in their liberality.

They were accustomed to see white people who brought them their necessaries, but they were accustomed to look upon every white man as an inferior being, therefore, those traders whom they had seen formerly, myself included, used to extort respect from them by threats to which they submitted for fear of offending the Chief of the Whites.

The *Gros Ventres* had heard from tradition of some Indians who had been at the Spanish settlements in former times and who had been admitted in the presence of the Governor. Being in a shining dress, surrounded by attendants and guards, he had made such an impression on their minds, that those who heard the tradition, formed the same idea of our chiefs or Proprietors in the North. They, indeed, could scarcely believe Messrs. Chaboillez and Henry to be those whom we called our Chiefs, for, had they been Chiefs, they would at least have brought a pipe of tobacco to give to an Indian.

They asked me who made them chiefs? were they warriors? what made them superior to other white men? I told them that they were chiefs by the multiplicity of their riches, and superior to others by the many charities they made to Indians of the North; but the more I said in their praise, the more contempt I brought upon myself, and if ever I regretted any thing in my life it was for having said too much.....

On the other hand Messrs. Chaboillez and Henry were much disappointed; they had promised themselves a pleasant voyage, they had a long and disagreeable one. They were accustomed with Indians who paid them due respect: the name of a Pro-

prietor went a great way among the northern tribes, but that name was not known at the Missurie.

Men of dignity must deck themselves better than the common voyageur if they wish to be considered as they should be. As the Indians have no idea of mental abilities, there must be some thing in the outward appearance to attract notice and command respect. M. Chaboillez had on a *capot* which had been once white, a good leather *Brix* (?) and a weather beaten hat, with a stout black beard of nine days' growth. Mr Henry only differed in the *capot*, as he had a corderoy jacket!..... To say the least, their appearance was not to their credit, nor to the interest of the Company. It was most galling to me, who understood some of the Indian language, to hear them despised and the American captains, whom they hated till their, praised.....

They had come to purchase horses, but found, none to their taste..... Mr. Henry avowed his disappointment and did not disguise his detestation of the Indians; he was displeased with himself, dissatisfied with his "equal" and disgusted with his inferiors..... Mr. Chaboillez, on the contrary, was as much at his ease as if he were in his own house; every thing pleased him; he sat in the throng, smoked the pipe when it came to his turn with as much ease as if he were bred a *Gros Ventre*, but Mr. Henry kept at a distance from the crowd and smoked his pipe alone.....

..... About midday, the *Borjue's* brother and some more of the *Gros Ventres* came back from the Shawyens to tell the Missurie Indians that the *Borjue* was wanting them all to go to the Shawyens. This news soon got known through the different villages and all the men and women began to make preparation to repair thither next morning.....



So many Indians could not be expected to be ready all at the same time; we were obliged to wait for them on the hills. At length, being all collected on the same hill; we were about 900 persons including men, women and children and as many horses, some loaded with corn and other produce of the Missourie, and also with European articles of traffic.

The Indians were dressed in their best, and marched out with flying colours and singing Indian songs. There was much in this procession that would give to a traveller a higher idea of Indian taste than is generally imparted by those who travel among them. Notwithstanding his prejudice against the Missourie Indians, Mr. Henry could not but say that there was nothing grander to be seen in this country, and, had he not seen it himself, he would not have believed that Indians had any notion of such regular marching and forming files and figures.

The men were separated from the women and children and formed in squares of sixty four; there were eleven of these squares, making the number of warriors about seven hundred, so that about three hundred were missing, the Americans having found their total number to be a little over one thousand men able to carry arms—*Gros Ventres* and *Mandans* included

We continued our march all day in the above manner, the men at the head, at a slow trot, while the women, children and baggage jogged on behind. Their order of march, their weapons which consisted of bow and arrows, lances, battle axes, shields, would have reminded one of old times, when our forefathers made war. At night, we all encamped on a level plain, where there was hardly a drop of water to be found.

Next morning, we continued our march in the same regular order, but more gaudy with paint and feathers, as we approached our destination. The *Shawyons* came to meet us in separate parties till the whole of the nation had joined our procession now composed of over two thousand horsemen.....

..... We arrived at the Shawyean camp a little before sunset and were all received with cordial amity. We accompanied the *Borgne's* brother to the *Borgne's* tent; the latter, being informed of the dignity of the strangers, received them with tokens of greater respect than the rest of the *Gros Ventres* had done, then asked leave to go and recommend good amity toward the nations; that they should not steal, nor quarrel with one another, but be as firm in their friendship as one nation.

Having mounted his famous horse, he passed like lightning through the middle of the camp, which was as thronged with people and horses as a market place, haranguing them in friendly terms, to have a good understanding among themselves. When he came down from his horse at the door of the lodge, he put the bridle of his horse in Mr. Chaboillez's hand. Mr. Chaboillez, sensible of the *Borgne's* generosity, gave him his bundle of goods untied.

The *Borgne* appeared much satisfied with the goods though I knew that, at another time, he would not have been satisfied with double their value. To show his importance to the Shawyens, he launched on the many tokens of respect conferred on him by the white people, and that these chiefs came from the Red River purposely to see him, and that he was sorry he had not a good horse to give to each.

Mr. Henry despairing to find to his taste, I enquired of the *Borgne* if he could not possibly procure him one "My son," said he, to-morrow I am to adopt one of the Shawyens for my son, and am to offer them a "pipe" on which the *Gros Ventres* will put all their goods and the Shawyens their horses. According to our manner of trade we ought to expect at least two hundred horses as we have that number of guns, besides other articles, to put on the *Pipe*. Out of that number you can

"choose out a horse for yourself, you shall have the first  
"choice.".....  
.....  
.....

A short while after sunset, a horrid uproar arose throughout the whole camp and we saw crowds running up a hill where more than half the two nations were already gathered, who by their cries and movements seemed in open quarrel. As every body went, we followed and found that it was occasioned by the three Assiniboines who, having arrived at the Missourie after our departure, had followed our track.

The Assiniboines and the Shawyens being on unfriendly terms, the latter wished to put them to death, but the *Gros Ventres* and Mandans, whose protection the Assiniboines relied upon and implored, would not allow the Shawyens to destroy them, unless they wished to violate the pledge of faith between the two nations. The many threats on both side nearly brought them to immediate hostility, but the *Gros Ventres* and Mandans having surrounded the prisoners on all sides brought them safe to the center of the camp.

The Shawyens were enraged to see themselves deprived of their prey by those whom they considered in their heart as their bitter enemies; many were the attempts made to break through their ranks with naked arms in order to kill the Assiniboines, who walked in the middle, singing their death song and awaiting their fate. But the *Borgne* was there, walking around the prisoners, brandishing his battle axe in the air, and threatening immediate revenge on the first who would touch them, but, at the same time, using all his eloquence to pacify both nations. The sound of the *Borgne's* voice was law to his own nation and struck terror with the Shawyens, and at last, put an end to the contest, Mr. Henry himself, who disliked these Indians, admitted that he had an heroical aspect.

The Assiniboines being now in the middle of the camp, and it being a rule with some Indians not to shed an enemy's blood within the limits of their huts or camp, they were safe. A party of Scioux who happened to be with the Shawyens at the time, took them under their protection for the night, and every body returned home, but with a different countenance they had before. Confidence was gone on both sides and suspicion, anxiety and hatred had taken its place. Some of them, indeed, made many efforts to raise the cloud from off their countenance by various topics, but the bane of revenge once planted in the Savage's heart was not to be removed by forced smiles. We went to rest, but could not sleep with the noise in the camp, the *Gros Ventres*, suspecting treachery, did not go to rest, but kept a watch over the actions of the Shawyens, all night.

Mr. Henry and I went in the morning to look for the owner of a beautiful speckled horse which we were bargaining the night before, but that noble animal attracted the notice, if not the envy, of all the *Gros Ventres*; we, however, got the owner to come and see the goods. He was rather taken up with their quantity and quality, but gave us to understand that he would see the result of the day and the decision of the nations about the *Pipe*.

Harangue succeeded harangue to get the women to make a long *shade* of leather lodges for the reception of the *pipe* and the dancers, but none seemed in a hurry to execute their orders till it was late in the day.

A certain number of respectable men were selected on both sides to execute the ceremonies of the *Pipe* and adopted son. Those on the intended son's side sent him naked and crying to the *Borgne*, who received him with the tenderness of a real father and had him clothed in the finest and most gaudy dress. He was led with great ceremonies to the *shade* which was

strewn with flowers, and weeds, bulls' horns, human skulls, bone, and scalps.

The young man began to dance *Le Grand Cahumet* and some of the *Gros Ventres* came with small articles of trade and laid them down, the Shawyens brought a few lean and old horses, but the former misunderstanding between the nations caused every thing to come but slowly.

The selected made themselves hoarse haranguing their respective nation, but in vain; nothing coming. The *Gros Ventres* represented to the *Borgne* that if they were to give their guns and ammunitions away to the Shawyens and render them defenceless, that the Shawyens would immediately fall upon them with their arms and ammunition.

"Shall those horses," said they, "that we are to get in exchange defend us or carry us home in safety? and if they did, must we abandon our women and children who are here exposed to the treachery of a perfidious nation? Did not the Shawyens destroy twelve of the Rocky Mountain Indians who went to treat for peace with them no later than last spring and do they not wish to do the same with us if we are foolish enough to disarm ourselves and put ourselves in their power? Have we not horses as well as they and we have ammunition and guns more than they have? then let us keep that superiority to ourselves, and if the Shawyens wish for our friendship let them keep their horses and be friends; but if on the contrary, let us show once more that we are men and that none but women can be terrified with threats".

Thus and more than this said the representative of the *Gros Ventres* in the full hearing of the Shawyens, but while he was yet speaking the cry of war was heard in every quarter of the camp. The shade, in an instant, was pulled down about the ears of those who were under it, and the adopted son threw his fine clothing to the *Borgne* and ran to his lodge. Nothing was

more horrid than the cries of those savages ready to destroy one another. All were running to the field for their horses : Shawyens, *Gros Ventres*, Mandans and we, white men, among the rest.

We soon got on horseback and, passing through the camp, we met with the owner of the speckled horse and having asked if he would now sell his horse, he shook his head several times with rage in his countenance, and with the back of his hand he made signs to us to be off as it were to say : " be off in time, ere worse may befall you " .

.....

The *Gros Ventres* and Mandans having collected on an eminence or rising ground above the camp, we all made a halt, and while we were preparing for the worse, the *Borgne*, who was on foot, came to Mr. Chaboillez saying : " My equal, lend me your horse " that I may go and speak to those dogs and know whether they " prefer peace to war ". Mr. Chaboillez did not relish the idea of parting with a famous runner at this time, but the *Borgne* pressed him in a commanding voice to obey. While Mr. Chaboillez was taking the saddle off the horse, I asked the *Borgne* if they were to fight. " My son ", said he, " we have too many children and women here to commence hostilities ourselves, " but, if we are attacked, we must not flinch " .

The *Borgne* soon passed through the crowd inviting all those who had breech clouts to follow him ; the other chiefs harangued with threatening voice the throng which was now gathered on the brow of the hill in front of the Shawyens' camp, of which no vestiges were now seen, for, on the cry of war, the women pulled down the lodges and huddled their alls on the horses and dogs and went off with speed. The Shawyens were all under arms at the distance of a parley from us. The *Borgne* then spoke to them :

" I thought, Shawyens ", said he, " that I made myself known to you several times before, and yet you treat me with contempt. You invited me to come to see you in peace, I obeyed you with an open heart and brought peace along with me ; but you allow me to go home on foot, with a heart full of anger. But I speak to you now not to reproach you or to praise myself, but to get your answer whether you prefer war to peace : Speak ! "

When the *Borgne* ceased to speak the Shawyens said ; " We know you very well, and we did not invite you to our land to make war upon you. The most of the present discord has begun among ourselves ; when that discord is adjusted you will hear our decisive answer ; therefore, go home in peace, take your time and fear not ". The two nations turned their back or wheeled about and thus ended the memorable fright we gained by following the *Gros Ventres* to the Shawyens, and thus ended a discord which at first seemed serious, but the nations being afraid of each other, the question was, which of the two would run off first and with honor.

Having advanced towards home about two leagues, we all encamped on a small rivulet and the *Borgne*, not being pleased with the answer he received from the Shawyens, determined not to go further until he got a more satisfactory one ; therefore he sent three young men to them in the night, who returned before day with a promise that the Shawyens would come to trade to the *Gros Ventres* village when the corn would be ripe.

We started early from this campment as we intended to get to the Missurie that night. After a disagreeable voyage of four days, we arrived at the villages, where I found a freeman who came up from the Pawnees, and who informed me that the freeman who had taken debts from the North-West Company had been taken prisoner by the Scioux &c., &c.

I did not wish to leave the Missurie so soon, but Messrs. Cha-boillez and Henry pressed me so that I left, after having disposed of the rest of my goods for some beaver brought me by some Rocky Mountain Indians during the night. Next morning, I crossed the Missurie with six horses well loaded and two light to carry myself and Mr. Caldwell. I was not a little proud when I considered that I was the first North trader who crossed the Missurie with four packs of beaver.....  
.....





JOHN M<sup>C</sup>DONALD OF GARTH

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

1791-1816



Antesque Dios fue Dios  
O que el Sol illuminab los penascos,  
Ta era noble casa de los Velascos (1).

The proud Velascos of Spain claimed an ancestry dating from the creation and beyond ! Mr. McDonald had not quite so exalted an opinion of the McDonalds, and felt content with claiming for them an existence coeval with and independent of " Old Noah " !

" It is asserted in the Highlands of Old Scotland, " he says, in the memorandum which prefaces his autobiographical notes, " that the McDonald's are coeval with the family of Old Noah, &c. ; that they had a boat of their own on Lock Lomond, independant of the ark, by which the chief of the clan saved as many as the boat

(1) " Before God was God. Before the Sun brightened the mountain tops, existed the noble House of the Velascos. "

*Noble come el Rey, e aun.....* " As Noble as the King, and even..... " wrote a Spanish nobleman under his signature. Being asked what he meant by " e aun ", he replied that, being a Knight, he was as noble as his King, and, being a Castilian, he was still more so, the King was only a Frenchman.

could safely hold, of course the finest and fairest of both sexes. Hence the superiority of that race above all others ever since.

“ Be that as it may, they have not, at any rate, fallen off, either in peace or war, from any of the race of Adam. ”

Mr. McDonald was born in the Highlands of Scotland in 1774, “ of gentle blood, ” as he says, “ being a descendant of the Lord of the Isles. ”

His father, a captain in the old 84th, had destined him for the Army, and had obtained for him—although he was then only fourteen years old—a commission in the same regiment. In consequence, however, of an accident which had happened to his right arm during his childhood, he was unable to pass the medical examination necessary for admission to the Army (1).

Having soon after lost his father, his grand uncle, General Small, and an older brother bound him with Mr. Simon MacTavish, whom they had met in England, as an apprentice clerk to the North West Company, and in the spring of 1791, he left for Canada, his new home.

He arrived in Quebec on the 1st of June, and on the 15th of the same month he was on board the canoe at

(1) Mr. McDonald's arm became slightly deformed in consequence of this accident, and the old Canadian *voyageurs*, in order to distinguish him from the numerous other McDonalds and McDonells, used to call him “ *Monsieur MacDinel, le bras croché.* ”

Lachine, having spent in Montreal the time barely sufficient to present his letters of introduction and to make the necessary preparations for his long voyage and for the new life to which he was destined. . He was seventeen years old!

Though rather small in stature and at a disadvantage on account of the injury he had sustained to his right arm, Mr. McDonald appears to have been of a quarrelsome and pugnacious disposition. He had hardly boarded the good ship "Canada" which took him to Quebec than he managed to pick a quarrel with a young officer, a fellow passenger, and challenged him to go on deck, on a very dark night, and fight a duel with pocket pistols! This freak greatly amused the officers on board, and Mr. McDonald was the first to make fun of it later.

He had great faith in his pocket pistols, and was very apt to resort to them as the readiest mode of settling his little controversies with his mates. Fortunately for him, while at Grand Portage, he happened to fall in with a burly North-West clerk, who, instead of yielding to his bad temper or accepting the judgment of the pocket pistols, went for a bit of rope and threatened the ambitious young duellist with a good thrashing. This seems to have quieted him for some time.

Mr. McDonald, like most North-Westerners, was brave, rash, reckless and domineering. He had a most decided disposition to seek redress at his own hands, and never

underrated his own doings and prowess. He would have probably done poor service in the Army, but he was just such a man as was required in the indisciplined and lawless wilds of the North-West. His indomitable energy and pluck carried him through where many would have failed, and his frank and generous nature endeared him to many.

The beneficial influence of his high character was particularly felt when the first open acts of hostility broke out between Mr. Miles McDonell, governor of Red River and the North-West Company, in 1814, by the seizure and confiscation by the former of the provisions destined for the northern departments.

Mr. McDonald strenuously exerted himself to bring about a compromise between the two parties, explaining to Lord Selkirk's people the position in which the servants of the North-West Company would be placed if they persisted in detaining in their possession the pemican and provisions required for the subsistence of their clerks and *voyageurs* in the northern regions. He, at the same time, explained to his co-partners in the North-West Company the *odium* which would fall on them if the Colonist were totally deprived of the seized provisions. By the good sense and the conciliatory spirit he displayed in this negotiation he, at last, brought the two parties to effect an agreement by which a considerable portion of the confiscated provisions were to be re-

turned to their legitimate owners, and security given for the payment of the balance retained (1).

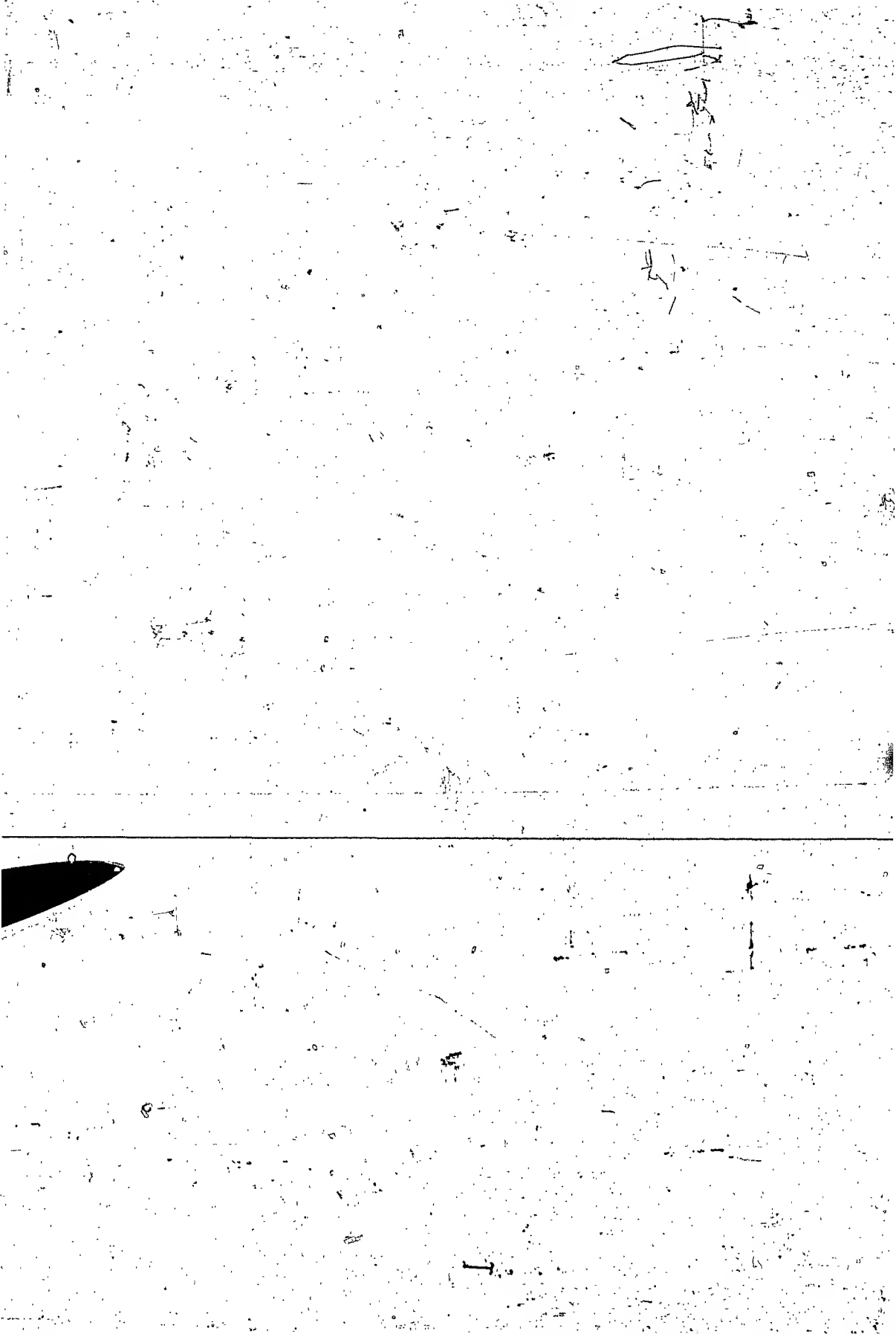
Mr. McDonald definitively left the North-West in 1816 and settled at Gray's Creek, in the county of Glen-gary, where he died at the good old age of 86, leaving several children, among whom, the late Judge Rolland McDonald, of Ontario, and Mr. de Bellefeuille McDonald, who married a Miss Harwood and to whose son, Mr. de Lery MacDonald, I am indebted for the permission to give to the public the following copious extracts from his grand-father's autobiographical notes (2).

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(1) See Gabriel Franchère : *Relation d'un voyage à la côte Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique septentrionale.* (1810-1814).

(2) See: Rev. Robert Campbell : "History of the St. Gabriel-Street Church, Montreal."





Garth Gray's Creek, 1st March, 1859.

Dear de Bellefeuille,

Yourself and my dear daughter-in-law have been long since desirous to know something of your forefathers—being a stranger in a strange land—and some sketch of my long life.

You will remember that I am in my eighty-ninth (89) (1) year and that my memory is failing.....

However, I shall try and meet your wishes, however incorrect and as briefly as I can.

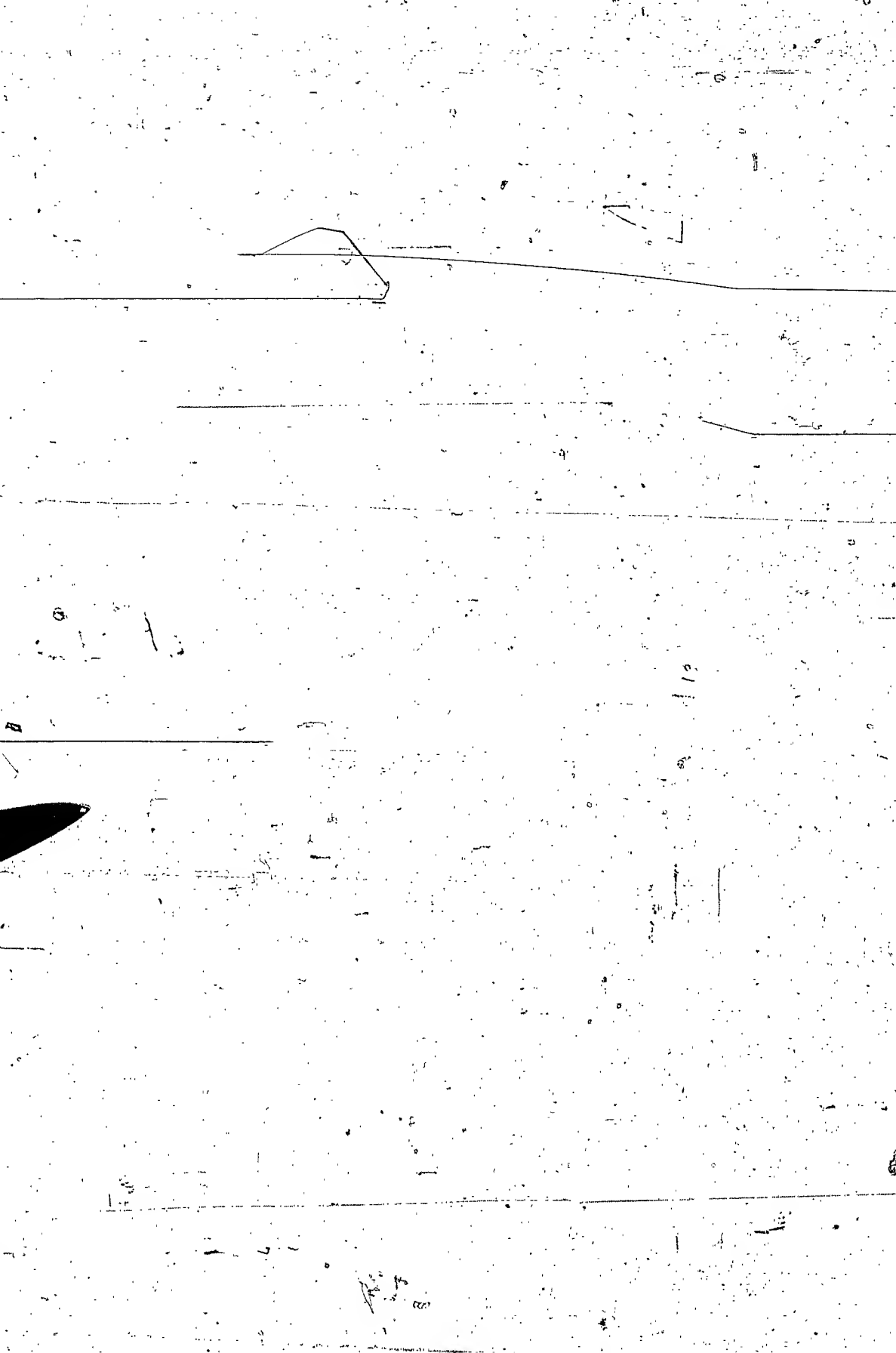
I am, Dear de Bellefeuille,

Your affectionate father,

JOHN McDONALD.

De Bellefeuille McDonald, Esq.

(1) More probably eighty-fifth; see page 11.



I was from school and too young when I left Old Scotland to know much of my relations, or care much for them, consequently this narrative which I have given you is very concise, and my absence from home ever since has left me very little acquainted with any of them.

My grand uncle, General Small, met the late Simon McTavish, head partner of the Old North-West Company, in London, and, with my brother Angus, of Pall Mall, bound me as a clerk to that Company for a definite number of years. At the end of my service, I was to get a share in the Concern.

On the 19 of April, 1791, I sailed from Greenock in the good ship "Canada," Captain Harvy, master. Among the passengers were Lt. Col. Scot, of the 60th I believe, his lady and two children; also a Capt Boyce and Ensign Kenedy. I was a good looking lad of 17 years old, and I soon became a favorite. In those days a passage of six weeks was considered very good; we got to Quebec on the 1st of June.

I occupied the same stateroom with Kenedy, a tall young Scot. Some how or other, we quarrelled; I challenged him to go on deck in a dark night; I had pocket pistols! Colonel Scot heard what passed and it amused him very much.....

At Quebec, Mr. McTavish, who had also landed from London, met Capt Harry who told him I was at the hotel "Franks" with Colonel Scot, who took great care of me. I was sent to Mr. McTavish's quarters, and he told me to proceed immediately to Montreal.

I left Quebec on the 3rd June with a Doctor Stewart and got to Montréal the 5th, in a calash..... I had some letters of introduction and particularly one to Col. Campbell, of the Indian Department, who was well acquainted with General Small. Col. Campbell was very kind to me; I dined with him, etc. He was married to a daughter of St-Luc La Corne, as ugly a woman as he was a handsome man. I received great kindness from many others during my stay.....

"About the 15th June, 1791, I left Lachine, under the patronage of the late Simon McTavish, in a large birch canoe manned by 14 choice *voyageurs* and our cook. A crowd of friends and spectators were there to witness our departure, a great event before the time of steamers. We landed at Ste Anne where the men paid their devotion to their titular Saint.....

The wind having fallen, we proceeded on Lake Huron to the Sanct St Mary's, where the Company had an establishment on the south side of the river. There was here a small settlement; Messrs Nolin and Johnston, who were, I believe, Indian traders, were the principal persons here. We made the portage and proceeded on our frail bark on Lake Superior to the Old Grand Portage, where we safely arrived on the fourth or fifth day, after visiting the trading posts at River Pic and Michipicoton.

There were great rejoicings at Grand Portage on Mr McTavish's arrival: several Partners were there from the interior, as well

as the Agents from Montreal, who conducted that branch of the business (1). The *tout ensemble* seemed strange. During a stay of perhaps a fortnight here I had a quarrel with a clerk, a large Englishman of the name of Harrison. He threw a loaf of bread at me, and I called him out—with my pocket pistols again.— He took a rope and said: "this is my pistol." He was afterwards under my command, and a very good fellow, but no trader; he never could learn to speak French! I believe he died in the country.

I was here appointed to be under the care of Mr. Angus Shaw; an excellent trader, a man who managed his men and the Indians well, and a kind Bourgeois to me. We started in his canoe—a much smaller one than those from Lachine—until we overtook his brigade of loaded canoes, which had left Fort Charlotte, at the north end of Grand Portage some days previous. In two or three days we overtook them, and he put me on board of the guide's canoe, one Antyme, who took great care of me.

At Cumberland Lake, several of the partners, with the Athabasca brigade, joined us, amongst whom was the celebrated Sir Alexander McKenzie. Lake Cumberland is noted for its fine sturgeon.

We proceeded to the north end of the lake and ascended *Rivière Maligne*, to Beaver Lake, and from thence, by lakes, rapids and portages, to *Ile-à-la-Crosse*, which was the next settlement...

We made but a short stay at *Ile-à-la-Crosse*, so named as being a famous resort to the Indians in playing their favorite game. We made the Long *Traverse* to Beaver River and found this river very low, it being as it were a mere rivulet compared to the other rivers. It abounds in wild game.....

(1) The annual general summer meeting.

We made our way slowly up this river for several days—snow was falling—until we got to *Portage d'Original*; we then struck off from Beaver River, made a long portage to *Lac d'Original*, and in about the distance of ten to fifteen miles we got to the settlement, where there were several Indians of the Cree and Assiniboine tribes waiting for our arrival (1).

Mr. Shaw made the necessary arrangements for the winter. Ice having already frozen up our passage, we got there just in time; next day the lake,—a good large lake—was frozen over.

Here we were fixed for the winter, in new and comfortable *chantiers*, with plenty of fire wood and good accessories. The fish was not of a good kind, not the real white fish, but, occasionally, the Indians brought in the flesh of deer of different kinds; no bread, which I thought rather strange, nor any vegetables, only fish and deer meat; *Joujours perdrix!* and not too much of that, at times.

Towards spring, Mr. Shaw sent me with an old interpreter, good old Simon, in search of Indians, a journey of several days on foot, in snow and water. I have often since reflected at what would have become of me if the old man had died on the way, or if we had accidentally separated; I did not know the way in the forest, and could not have returned !.....

We fell upon the Indian camp, and, after feasting a couple of days, made our way back to the Lake.—Thus from Greenock, in

(1) It would appear by the above that the *Lac d'Original* Fort, established, in 1789, by Mr. Angus Shaw, was at a lake of that name on the upper course of the Beaver River and north-east of Edmonton, and not at *Lac d'Original* near *Tête Jaune Cache*, the source of the Fraser River, as stated in the foot note to be found at page 31—“Reminiscences”—of the first series of these documents. Mr. Shaw, when he says—page 33—that *Fort des Prairies* was about eight days distance to the south-east, was probably speaking of the old French *Fort des Prairies* on the lower Saskatchewan.

There still exists a post or station at *Lac d'Original*, north-east of Edmonton; it is probably Mr. Shaw's old fort of 1789.



the Clyde, my first "Summer tour" was to Lake d'Orignal, a zigzag distance of perhaps eight or ten thousand miles!

In the spring of 1792, I killed the first swan. I was quite proud of it. About the middle of May we got a passage clear of ice on the lake. The men got the canoes, furs and baggage across in a couple of days. While doing so, I shot a couple of beavers, which were there plentiful. We made our way slowly down the Beaver River; it was then the month of June, and a very late season. 1792.  
Climate.

In crossing from the entrance of the River to Fort *Isle-à-la-Crosse*, we were all nearly lost in the *Traverse*, the ice nearly crushing the canoes between two fields. We got ashore however, and remained until the 10th June when the lake was clear..... We got the brigade at Grand Portage in good time, the furs without any damage.

We were at Grand Portage a couple of weeks refreshing, outfitting, &c., meeting the Montreal Agents and feasting on the best of every thing and the best of fish. Sir Alexander MacKenzie was then one of the Agents of the Company, and was preparing for his voyage of discovery to the Pacific across the Rocky Mountains; General Small had requested of him to take me with him. He wrote to me, but I had become attached to Mr. Shaw and expressed my reluctance, and declined.

I was then ordered to return with the same brigade and the same guide to Lake d'Orignal and deliver the charge to another, a young lad of the name of Grame (?), who had been in the country before me, and some years older, and so soon as I had done so, at *Isle-à-la-Crosse*, we were to proceed to *Lac d'Orignal* and Mr. Shaw, who was to go to the Saskatchewan, was to send for me as his assistant in that department; Mr James Finlay,



a partner, being also in the same department, lower down about two hundred miles, at *Fort de l'Isle*—on an island.....

The Phantom Coach.

During this trip, Mr. Grime related to me a circumstance which savours something of the second thought.

The winter previous, he had gone with a couple of men from the fort of *Isle-à-la-Crosse* to some Indian camp,—distance about twenty miles—with dogs and sleighs for some furs and the flesh of a moose-deer. On their return on the lake, the night being as clear as generally in such a latitude when about full-moon, he had got ahead of his sleighs, which were heavily laden, and being within a mile of home, at a point or peninsula well known to myself, he sat down to await his men and smoke his pipe. While so engaged, he heard a rustling behind him, as it were a gust of wind. He turned round, and plainly saw a coach, with two horses milk-white, driving towards him, and which, when near him, rose in the air and passed. He plainly saw three persons in the coach, and saw it alight at a small river near by. I told him he must have been dosing and half asleep; he declared not, and he was a good religious lad.

This would all have passed for a dream was it not that, next season, having gone out duck hunting with one of his men, neither were ever seen again, but the canoe was found upset at the mouth of the river. There is, surely, something in this more than superstition.

We got to our winter quarter at *Lac d'Original*, Moose Lake, in better time than last season and found there old Simon, who had been left in charge, and a few Indians waiting for our arrival.

We had not been many days in our winter quarters when a couple of men, with an Indian woman as their guide arrived,

with each a horse for themselves, a saddled one for me and two for my baggage and provisions.

They rested a day or two, and I left with them, rejoicing at the idea of joining again Mr. Shaw, whose kind treatment had attached me to him as to a father. He told the Indians I was his little brother.

After three or four days in strong woods, we came to the border of the prairies, when the guide told me to follow an Indian trail which was perceptible. I went along and met an Indian hunting on my path; he stood till within a short distance, laid down his gun on the grass, as much as to say—seeing me almost a boy—“do not be afraid.” He pointed out my way and I soon arrived, at my destination, where I found Mr. Shaw, with about sixty men, putting up houses and erecting stockades for safety and for winter quarters.....

Fort George established.

The new fort was upon the margin of a fine hummock of pine, upon a rising hill or bank, with the noble Saskatchewan in front, its banks covered with strong wood for perhaps a mile in breadth and twenty in length along the river. Here we passed the winter in a new country, and, consequently, filled with all kinds of animals.

The tribes of Indians who visited us during the winter were the Strong Wood and Prairie Crees; the Strong Wood and Prairie Assiniboils, the savage Blackfeet, the Piegan and Blood Indians, very numerous tribes who spoke the same language, and had been once of the same tribe. There were also the Sarcees, a small tribe which had been cut off in war.....

In May, we made all the preparations, putting the canoes in order, making *bateaux* and pemican, packing furs, and the 15th, we were all ready to embark for our *rendez-vous* at Grand Portage;

1793.

All afloat on the Grand Saskatchewan, swollen by the melting snow from the Rocky Mountains and its tributary streams; innumerable herds of buffaloes and deers and many grizzly bears on its banks, feeding and crossing in such numbers that we often got our canoes amongst them and shot hundreds without need.....

We got all safe to Cumberland depot, and deposited the pemican for the northern departments, where nothing of the kind can be procured. This is the usual mode of supply. Care is taken to procure, if possible, a sufficient quantity to enable all the brigades to proceed without delay..... Another supply also came from Red River, the Selkirk settlement, the depot being at the entrance of river Winnipeg, now Fort Alexander.

We left Cumberland generally about the 1st of June, and made our way in full spirits and health to head-quarters, where we met the gentlemen from Montreal in good fellowship, after an absence of twelve months. The men, on arrival at Grand Portage, were always regaled with plenty, and feasted on bread and pork—an unusual diet—and a *coup* to make them merry. There were usually about six to eight hundred men on the ground.

We regaled generally about a couple of weeks, then refitted, made up the crews and prepared to return each to our allotted department, under our appointed *Bourgeois* and clerk. We got safe to our winter quarters: Mr. Shaw to the new establishment, called "Fort George," and Mr. James Finlay to *Fort de l'Isle*.

This season, I first met Mr. Hughes who was lately killed on the rail-road, near Lachine. He fortunately stopped with Mr. Finlay, and I was told off to winter at Fort George with Mr. Shaw.

While at breakfast, one morning in November, an express—two men mounted on the best of horses—came in from Mr. Finlay's, asking for assistance. A war had broken out between the Prairie Crees and the Mandanes on the Mississourie, and several had been killed on both sides. The Missouri Indians, knowing that the Crees were in league with the whites on the Saskatchewan, determined war upon them also; they killed an old man who had gone to the plains for his horses.

It was not known which particular band had committed the act, when a numerous band of those tribes came to Mr. Finlay's fort under pretence of trade. The fort being on an island, a boat was employed to cross them and all their effects, except their horses, which were left to the care of some boys. When all had crossed, they, as usual, walked into the fort, and, after trading the little they had, they began being insolent. It soon became evident that they intended to overpower and murder them and then pillage the goods. When, at last, they boasted of having killed Mr. Finlay's old man, and said they would pacify him with presents, Mr. Hughes, feeling enraged of their impudence, exclaimed: "Presents will not do. To arms, men!" He seized his gun, the men followed his example, and the Indians, surprised of this sudden resolution, ran out of the house and, *pêle-mêle*, men and children swam across the river.

Thus Mr. Hughes, as brave a fellow as ever treaded the earth, saved Mr. Finlay, his men and property by his daring conduct.

As I have said, we were at breakfast when this express was brought to us at Fort George. Though young, I could not refrain my disgust at Mr. Finlay's conduct, who, after allowing such an insult with sixty good men under him, came entreating for more. Mr. Shaw felt a little angry with me; Mr. Finlay being a partner, he thought a boy like me should not take such liberties. He said "You say too much, my young man; prepare

"yourself to be off with that express in two days." No appeal from this! On the third day we left on horse back, badly clothed and rigged out for the cold days of November, and only one blanket under our saddle.

In the mean time, Mr. Shaw got information that a new party had got to the lower parts of the Saskatchewan from Montréal, in opposition to the North-West Company. This made him change his instructions to me. I was first to proceed to Mr. Finlay's and then go to Sturgeon River, in the lower parts, where the opposition had stopped to winter with a band of Indians, get a few men and an assistant or interpreter at the nearest settlement, erect *chantiers* and oppose the opposition with all my might and with as little expense as possible.

The nearest post was about sixty miles up the Bow River or south branch of the Saskatchewan, and then under the charge of a clerk, a clever man, but a little too fond of the glass. From this gentlemen I obtained a good and faithful interpreter and ten men, with the necessary tools, goods, &c.

But I ought to have mentioned that we had, my two men and myself, a distance of about three hundred miles to travel on horse back to get to the settlement mentioned, which we accomplished in six days. (?) We had bad weather most of the way, which was after all fortunate for us, for during a snow storm, while gaining a distant hummock of wood in the middle of the prairies, we fell upon a dog, fresh killed with an arrow, a sure indication that a party of the enemy were still hovering about. The snow storm prevented our being seen, and we got safe at our destination.

We put up the *chantiers*, stores, &c., and passed the winter in broils with my opponent, who was an old experienced trader, Mr. David Grant.

It may not be out of the way to mention that on New Year's day, during the customary firing of musketry, one of our opponent's bullies purposely fired his powder through my window. I, of course, got enraged and challenged him to single combat with our guns; this was a check upon him ever after.

.....  
.....  
.....

I think I remained this summer also with Mr. Hughes. The 1796. settlement upon Bow River having been attacked by the Missouri Indians, they killed all the men and pillaged all the goods in the Hudson's Bay fort, excepting one person, a clerk who hid himself in the cellar amongst some rubbish, and then attacked our fort. They were beaten off and several killed. Our fort was in charge of one Jaccot Finlay, an Indian half brother of Mr. James Finlay, a man of courage. He had also an Indian chief of the Cree tribe, called "*Beau Parleur*," in the fort, and a fine speaker he certainly was.....

On Mr. Shaw's return we had every thing in high order. Mr. Duncan McGillivray came with Mr. Shaw; he was brother to Mr. McGillivray and to Mrs. Reid, widow of the late Chief Justice of Montreal, and still alive (1859) in Montreal, at Park House, with Hugh Taylor, Esq.....

.....

Buffaloes were scarce this season near the Post and more so 1797. in spring. In consequence, as soon as the canoes were ready, <sup>Scarcity of</sup> <sub>food.</sub> they were sent off with part of the men to live upon their hunt along the river in twos and threes.....

.....

1798.

Establishment of  
Fort  
Augustus.

It having been found that the Indians' hunting grounds were getting too distant, and also that one establishment was not enough for the many tribes who met there and sometimes quarrelled, Mr. Hughes was ordered about 200 miles further up the river to commence another fort or settlement, which we named "Fort Augustus" (1), and to make as much progress as possible during the summer, so that Mr. Shaw might find a house, and store for his goods on his return.

Mr. Hughes and myself passed the summer at our respective posts, with about six men each. I made a few excursions to the hunters' tents, and became a good buffaloe hunter, particularly in the saddle, and I had a couple of swift horses for that purpose.

It was usual to send good horses to the lower part of the river where commenced the prairies, and there await the canoes, in order to follow the brigade on their way up, to provide them with provisions. The partners and clerks rode for this purpose with the hunters. Riding a swift horse in the fine valley of the Saskatchewan, abounding with buffaloes, deer and game of all sorts, was, we thought, the most pleasant part of our lives: we rode all day, following the progress of the brigade against a current of four knots.

Mr. Shaw being daily expected, I rode to try and meet him, which I did after a ride of about twenty miles; the men led fresh horses for Mr. Shaw and for Mr. McGillivray.....

I was ordered to join Mr. Hughes at Fort Augustus, with a complement of men and goods for the trade.....

We had here, (beside the Hudson's Bay Company, whose fort was within a musket shot of ours), the opposition, on the other side of us, of the new concern I have already mentioned, which

(1) Edmonton.

had assumed a powerful shape under the name of "X Y. Co.," at the head of which was the late John Ogilvy, in Montreal, and at this establishment, a Mr. King, an old South Trader in his prime and pride as the first among bullies.....

This summer, as I have said, I passed at Fort George. I had 1799. with me a young Canadian gentleman, from Berthier, Mr. Ducoigne, a clever young man.....

I had now become a partner and more mature in years..... 1800. About this time, Mr. Shaw left the country and retired to Montreal as an additional agent.....

I remained to pass the summer with Decoigne at Fort Augustus, 1801. and Mr. McGillivray left for Kaministiquia. He had decided <sup>Fort de l'Isle.</sup> that we should abandon Fort George and build about twenty miles further up, on a pretty island, to be safer from enemies.

Mr. Decoigne consequently made some progress in building, and when Messrs. McGillivray and Hughes returned they found stores ready for the goods; the men had to put up their own houses, six to a mess.....

Mr. Duncan McGillivray being unwell left the country for 1802. Montreal; and there died after two or three years; as fine a fellow as ever lived.

A Mr. Cuthbert Grant, a middle-aged man, was sent in his place..... He was a good man,



but not active enough for such a department. He saw that, and told me to act as I thought proper. I stayed at *Fort de l'Isle* and he proceeded to Fort Augustus, and wintered there with Mr. Hughes.

Spring came on and, Mr. Grant feeling quite ill, I had to fit him out a comfortable awning in one of the boats to take him down the river to Cumberland House..... We got Mr. Grant to Kaminstiquia where he soon died (1). Mr. Grant recommended me to replace him. A Mr. Belleau, one of the most powerful men I ever met with, was sent with me as an assistant this year, as the department was noted for its unmanageable and unruly men.

I took my departure thus as master of the largest department in the North with a brigade of twelve large canoes,—fine but turbulent crews.....Some way or other, an arrangement was made, and the North-West Company bought up the X Y Company and Mr. King became one of my clerks. (2) He was now with me on the island. We had also a clerk, Mr. Rowan, son of old Dr. Rowan of Montreal and father to the present Doctor Rowan of Quebec notoriety, a fine resolute fellow who died in the Saskatchewan two or three years ago (3).

(1) This does not agree with the following note made by the Hon: R. McKenzie in his "Reminiscences," when speaking of a letter he had received from Mr. A. MacKenzie.—Sir Alexander MacKenzie—dated 2nd August 1799. "This letter breathes of irritation towards his co-agents; their engagements as such are on the eve of expiring and, I fear, of finishing without a renewal. Besides, mention is made of Mr. Cuthbert Grant's will. He died this year, 1799, and made Sir Alexander McKenzie his executor." Mr. McDonald has evidently got confused in his dates, as he himself admits further on.

(2) This transaction can only have been a partial sale of the interests of the X Y Company in that quarter, as Mr. McDonald, a few lines further, speaks of the strenuous opposition which was made to him by that company. It was, more probably, only a re-engagement of Mr. King under the banners of his old opponents. The coalition of the two companies took place only after Mr. Simon McTavish's death, in 1804.

(3) Doctor Rowan of Quebec was born at Fort Edmonton on the Saskatchewan. His father sent him to Lachine to begin his education, then to Edinburgh, where he

We had now a strong, fresh opposition, with Sir Alexander MacKenzie at their head, from Forsyth, Richardson and Company. A Mr. de Rocheblave for the new Company, a gentleman of family, on one side and the Hudson Bay Fort on the other; I was thus placed between two fires.

Death of  
Mr. King.

.....  
During the winter, a messenger came from some Indians who were encamped two days journey from here, asking to send for the furs they had, in order to pay their debts. I ordered Mr. King to get ready and to set off next morning with a couple of men and as many dog sleighs. That morning we were taking tea at the Hudson's Bay House. The master, Mr. Hallet, said to King: "Take care, King, of Mr. La Mothe,"—Mr. de Rocheblave's clerk, who also was going to the camp,—"he will shoot you." "Ha! ha!" said King, laughing, "to be shot by La Mothe would be a good joke, indeed!" Next morning he set off, a dashing fellow, in high glee and was to be absent three nights.

The second night, Mr. King's wife and a child—a daughter about six years old—were in bed with a clear rousing fire of blazing wood. The little girl awoke her mother saying: "Mother, there is my father at the foot of the bed, his neck all red." The mother told her: "Don't you, fool; lie down." She did so, and awoke a second time in the same manner, but finally slept. Next morning, I saw Mrs. King who told me all this, and

graduated, and to London and Paris, where he spent several years perfecting himself in his profession. He was attached to Sir George Simpson's celebrated expedition around the world, in 1841 and 1842, during which he took voluminous and interesting notes which were published at the time.

Doctor Rowand settled in Quebec in 1847, and soon acquired a most prominent position among the members of his profession, and endeared himself to the public generally by his remarkably kind and sympathetic disposition towards the poor and suffering. He died in February 1889, leaving a widow—Miss Margaret Kincaird, of Edinburgh,—two sons and four daughters.

also to all others, but no notice was taken of it. What was our astonishment, next day, to see poor King brought home a corpse on one of the sleighs.

It appears that some dispute had arisen between King and LaMothe about some furs and, as the latter said, he shot King in self defence..... The shot was in the neck and his neck was all red as the little girl had described it.

I buried King with military honors; LaMothe came down to Montreal and was allowed to live. He was of a respectable family and escaped. (1).

This caused no friendship towards Mr. de Rocheblave, tho' perfectly innocent of any premeditation against King.

Spring came on and we prepared to be off, and arrived in due time to Fort William. Mr. Hughes remained behind, and Mr. David Thompson, an astronomer who had come to the department, had orders to go on a trip of discovery towards the Rocky Mountains, and across the mountains if he could.

1803.  
Rocky  
Mountain  
House.

I returned from Fort William in due time with the brigade, and found all right, and I determined to build further up towards the Rocky Mountains in order to try and meet a new tribe of Natives, the Contonais (2). But I find that I am a twelve

(1) See Lord Selkirk's Sketch of the British fur Trade in North America. LaMothe was evidently acting in self defence against a much stronger man and a desperate character, as Mr. McDonald himself has already stated. This occurred in 1801.

(2) At the forks of the North Saskatchewan and Clearwater rivers.

Several other trading stations have held, at different times, the name of "Rocky Mountain House." There was a Rocky Mountain House near the head of the Peace River, in longitude 122°, which was also known as "Hudson's Hope."—See Mr. Tyrrell's Report, and Geo. Reports, 1886. "E", page 9. Jasper Haws' House—Jasper

months before my time. However incorrect I may as to time, circumstances are the same. This then ought to be 1802.

Mr. Thompson had not done as I expected. During the winter, I took three good men with dogs, &c. and went up the river myself, a journey of a week, going and returning, and found the gap in the mountain not to be exactly as Mr. Thompson represented it.

Took my departure early and mustered all my forces along the route at the different points. Many incidents occurred too long to relate, many buffaloes and deers killed, many bears seen, &c. This brings to my memory an incident which took place near the Rocky Mountain House.

Got to Fort William all safe. Refitted the brigade, sent it off and Mr. Daniel McKenzie was appointed in my place to act in concert with Mr. Hughes, while I myself took my departure for Montreal, after an absence of twelve or fifteen years. I got to Montreal in company with some other gentlemen, met a sister whom I had left in Edinburg in my aunt Spauldings' family and now

House—at the sources of the Athabasca River, has also been called by the same name.

In 1800, Mr. John Thomson, a clerk in the North-West Company, who, two or three years later, became a Partner, established a trading post on the Mackenzie River "in full view of the Rocky Mountains at whose smallness I was greatly surprised" and called it "Rocky Mountain Fort." It was soon after abandoned and, in 1805, Mr. Alexander MacKenzie, the Partner in charge of the Great Bear Lake Department, already calls it "Old Rocky Mountain House." It was then going to ruin.

In 1798, the same Mr. Thomson, then acting under Mr. James McKenzie, who was in charge of the Athabasca Department, established a fort at the entrance of the Little Red River into the Peace river—a house 28 x 24!—which he called *Fort de la Rivière Rouge, ou Grand Marais*, probably because the bed of Peace River at and below the mouth of the Little Red River was formed of low muddy islands. See Geo : Reports, 1875, page 162.

married to the Hon. Colonel McGillivray. We were now entire strangers to one another, civilized manners were entirely strange to me.

I stayed in Montreal at my sister's two or three weeks, and left for my native country, intending at first to land on my native soil. I left for New-York by Lake Champlain, where we found a solitary schooner bound for Whitehall, on board of which I took passage at the tune of \$35.00. There, fearing the yellow fever was raging in New-York, I determined to steer for Boston.

I visited Salem, some twelve miles off, where I saw a painting of the attack of Bunker Hill. A mounted officer appeared leading the attack at the head of his regiment, the 84th; I was told it was General Small, then colonel of that regiment. A Mr. McLeod who travelled with me turned around and said that officer was my uncle; some Americans were present and the consequence was an invitation to dinner.

I remained in Boston a month,—as no vessel sailed during that time for Great Britain, then at war with France,—feasted by its kind people, Colonel Parkins in particular, whom I met in his travels in Canada and who was all attention to me. At last, the "John Adams" sailed and in her I got safe into the Mersey, she being an American vessel.

1804.

It was decided in Council that I was to take the English River department in the place of Donald McTavish, who left in his turn for Montreal. Mr. McKenzie (Daniel) did not do as coadjutor to Mr. Hughes; he was appointed some where else, and Mr. John McDonald took his place. I, consequently, began to refit my men with Mr. Campbell, a partner junior to myself, who had been some years in the department.

Mr. Campbell remained at *Lac La Rouge*, about half way up English River, and I left for *Isle-à-la-Crosse*, where I passed the winter. The Hudson's Bay Company had an establishment here also; we passed a quiet winter. We had a post also at Green Lake under Mr. Colin Robertson, who afterwards behaved somewhat amiss. I discharged him, and he joined Lord Selkirk's party.

.....1805.

It was ordered in our Council that I should return to my old station on the Saskatchewan (1) with Mr. Hughes. Although a very dangerous department I preferred it. I assisted Mr. Hughes to get all ready and we left Fort William with our fine but turbulent crew. I determined, in council with Mr. Hughes, that I should take four canoes and about twenty-five men and go up as far as I could to take up my quarters on the Bow River, to explore the country and trade with the Blackfeet and Mississouri Indians.

In going up and rounding a point in the river, I came upon a war party of the Plain Crees, faces all black; they had seen the canoes at a distance, and waited for us. I did not hesitate to jump amongst them, and, after some parley, I gave them a bit of tobacco, a glass of liquor and left them.....

We continued ascending the river, which is nearly equal in size to the other branch. We passed where the Indians had destroyed the Hudson Bay Company's fort some years before, as stated, and came to the Grand Prairies, in some parts abounding in all kinds of animals. There is a remarkable place called *Bois d'Original*. I never met with a more beautiful spot: there

(1) About sixty miles up the south branch of the Saskatchewan.

is a small river from the southward. It is a favorite encampment for the Indians.

There is an elbow in the river parallel to that on the north branch; a most beautiful place. I crossed the neck of land, perhaps ten miles, with my interpreter, while the canoes, always in sight, had to go around ten miles at least. While laying down on the grass waiting for the brigade a stately buck elk passed by us; the prairie being undulating we did not see one another until he was upon us. It being the rutting season, he gave a loud call which startled us; we turned around and shot him. The loud call is for the does, which they answer with a kind of whistle.

We kept on for four days against a four knots current. Almost run over by the buffaloes at our campment. This is their rutting season also, and coming down like an avalanche, those behind pushed the others down the banks. We were obliged to keep on large fires and fire guns to keep them off. They came some times a few yards from our tents or canoes.....

Chester-  
field  
House.

We at last found a low point of wood fit for erecting stockades and houses, and I determined to make that the end of my journey. It was at what is called New Chesterfield House, (1) where

(1) Chesterfield House was at the mouth of the Red Deer River, on the South Saskatchewan, and at a considerable distance below what is known to-day as "Bow River."

It would appear that the whole course of the Saskatchewan River was, at that time, indifferently called *Rivière des Arcs*—Bow River—and *La Fourche des Gros Ven- tres*. If so, it becomes doubtful whether the circular letter from Mr. Wm. McGillivray mentioned in the foot note of page 79 of the "*Esquisse Historique*" which prefaces the first series of these documents, refers to the "Old Bow Fort" above Calgary. That letter, dated the 25th July, 1804, from Kamanistiquia, contains the following: "We have no reasonable cause to apprehend a scarcity of provisions next year, both from the ample supply of goods sent to the River Opas and R River and the establishment of the Bow River."

"Old Bow Fort" must have been built at a later period, as the trading post mentioned by Mr. McDonald appears to have been the most distant one then established by the

a detachment of the Hudson's Bay people soon joined us in order to get a share of the furs and provisions.

The Blackfeet roaming tribe found us out in a couple of weeks and encamped with us to the number of sixty tents which in a short time accumulated to one hundred. We had pickets and houses up in less than a month.

I had a very large military marquise with ropes extending around it in which I received the chiefs, who had never seen anything like it. I entertained them in it some times upon beef-steak and tea, &c., which they called "medecine water."

About Christmas a horseman was seen by the watch coming at full speed. He was superbly mounted and finely dressed in clean new deer skin, ornamented with porcupine quills; a very handsome man and a perfect rider. In an instant, he was off his horse, which he gave to one of the men standing by idle and entered my marquise. An Indian  
battle.

He in substance said: "I am of the Missisourie Indians; we have made peace with the whites, but we are at war with the Blackfeet; they surround you, and are also your friends. I come from a small band, we are but few, but if you receive us as friends, we will fight our way in, and trade or fall." I gave him some pieces of tobacco, smoked a pipe with him and told him we had nothing to do with their quarrel; that our chief object was trade and to bring all Indians their necessaries. With this he mounted his fiery steed and made off at full speed.

The Blackfeet Camp of about five hundred warriors was within a mile; some young men who were always upon the look out

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North-West Company on that communication. Mr. McGillivray must have referred to some establishment on the South Saskatchewan proper, also called "Bow River."

Chesterfield House was re-established in 1822 by Mr. Donald McKenzie, but had to be abandoned a few years afterwards on account of the unfriendly dispositions of the Natives, who murdered several of the traders.



(scouts), saw all this and reported it in the camp. We expected the strangers next day, when, about noon, volleys of musketry and then a call for more ammunition from the Blackfeet indicated that a battle was going on. I at once determined to ride out and try to quell the disturbance; it was an imprudent act from which I was dissuaded by my men. The battle continued till dark, when the sound of fire arms ceased. Scouts soon came in and reported that the Mississouri Indians were surrounded and that in the morning the Blackfeet would kill them all. Several of the latter were brought in killed and wounded.

The result of the battle was that while the Blackfeet thought their prey secure, the latter quietly made their escape, and when the day came, the Blackfeet found an empty camp with only a few furs and provisions for booty. The fugitives carried away their wounded and also their dead, so that their scalps might not adorn the triumph of their victors. The Blackfeet, however, pursued them next morning and made them drop their dead and wounded, and more were killed on both sides.

The dead men were taken in and the men were called to dig graves, as they had spades, &c. On this, a large procession took place; the near relatives, men and women, pierced their own flesh with arrows, and a mournful song was kept on which had a most depressing effect on us.

Indian  
credulity

The winter passed on, and we got ready early for our return. I was anxious to get all the Indians away, that they should not see us taking away our remaining property, particularly tobacco, ammunition, liquor, &c., &c. My interpreter was an ingenious fellow; he secretly made a large kite, and one clear night, only a few young Indians being inside, he let it off. The young Indians, of course, were brought out to see the sight. It hovered above us for a little time, then disappeared and was destroyed. They had never seen any thing of the kind, and next morning gave the alarm in the camp.

The principal chiefs where ordered in my hall, when the interpreter showed them a pretended letter with some marks upon it, and told them it was from the Master of Life ordering them off in three days to a stated point, and bidding them not to return for several days, else they should meet a numerous army of Crees and Assinibois who were in search of them.

In five days we were gone and saw no more of them ; we got safe off with all we had, but at night kept watch for fear of treachery. We found buffaloes and consequently had plenty, so we merely floated down, as we were before our time. The Hudson's Bay people, benefitting by our strategy, kept close to us, but they were safer as they had large barges anchored out in the river at night.

We were drawing near *Bois d'Original*, where the Indians I had seen when coming up had appointed to meet me, and from whom I expected furs. I kept this secret from the Hudson's Bay people as well as from my own men for fear of indiscretion. I called my guide and principal man and told him :—“ Bouché, it is my intention to be off before day ; we are now out of all danger ; you are in plenty, so you will remain for a certain time. Take as much buffalo fresh meat as you can.” I told him the day he should leave and when he would be expected at the next fort.

The expedition attacked.

Death of Boucher.

He found it all right, poor fellow ! and pitched his tent where I had had mine. A buffalo path led the way from the prairie to the water and a small tuft of wood on each side, a beautiful spot. The boats were at anchor with their lading and the canoes were drawn upon the beach, the men, as usual, sleeping under them. Thus all was right.

The banks were high but sloping. One of the men came to Bouché and told him he had gone to the top of the bank and had seen something at a distance, but could not make out whether it was a band of elks or horses and riders, but that he

was inclined to think that it was the latter, and advised Bouché to leave the place.

Bouché, a fine, faithful and trusty man, who had left his family the year before, intending to return in three years, replied:—"No, my orders are to stay here; the time will be out to-morrow morning and then we shall all leave this; all is ready as ordered."

That night they were attacked at day break, a volley was fired in Bouché's tent; where three men were in bed asleep, and all of them were killed.

This volley aroused the whole camp; those in the boats at anchor were able to defend themselves and return the shots; those under the canoes got them in the water and lost two men, but the firing from the boats drove off the Indians. The brigade went on and arrived at *Bois d'Orignal*. The Crees went in pursuit but all were miles off by that time. (1) I had in the mean time gone on as I have said. I met the band of Crees at Bois d'Orignal, got what they had and left for the next settlement.

The brigade came to the settlement and gave this disagreeable intelligence. If I had stayed I would have fallen where Bouché lay. Thus Providence again preserved me;—so often and so often.—We made our way to Cumberland and, in a few days, were joined by Hughes and his brigade, and all got safe at Kaministiquia, where we met our friends, refitted and reformed our crews.

Being in want of good men, I was requested to take a well manned canoe of fourteen hands, and, with Mr. Donald McIntosh;

(1) This is, most probably, the attack upon the whites referred to by Mr. Charles McKenzie in his second expedition to the Missouri; see 1st series. Mr. MacDonald makes a mistake of one year and refers to what took place in 1804, as may be seen a little further on when he speaks of Mr. de Rocheblave as being in opposition to him, which could not have been in 1805 as the two North-West Companies reunited in 1804.

—a stout strong man, now no more,—to pay a visit to Old Grand Portage, about forty miles distant, in order to try and get some hands who might be induced to leave Forsyth, Richardson & Co and enter our service, Sir Alexander MacKenzie acting then as head of that concern.—We still had a clerk there with two or three men, as a mere Indian trading post.—We soon got there at the rate of eight miles an hour on the smooth surface of Lake Superior.....

I resumed assistance to Mr. Hughes, got ready, sent off our brigade and followed them after a few days. We got safe to the old Saskatchewan, where we passed the winter in strong opposition. I remained at the Island Fort, Mr. Hughes at Fort Augustus and Mr. Thompson at Rocky Mountain House. I however went by land to Rocky Mountain House, and saw the arrival of part of the brigade with the necessary goods, and rode back to Fort Augustus, and then to my island winter quarters, having Mr. de Rocheblave on one side and Mr. Halcro on the other in strong opposition.....

.....(2) 1806.

..... 1807.

It was decided in council at Fort William, that I should take charge of Red River Department, my namesake, Big McDonell retiring,—a most powerful man who, however, did not command his men as he ought,<sup>2</sup> an easy man of no exertion.

This being a high department, with a set of the worst men in the employ,—having less distance to go and more time to perform

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(2) He goes to Montreal, on the sick list.

the distance,—I did not like it much, tho' it suited my state of health better.

I found that many abuses existed ; I began a reformation which at first displeased the men, but finally they found it better. I had a very able assistant, Mr. Alex. McDonell, afterwards Sheriff of Ottawa district ; we made very useful reforms and abolished many abuses. I had one or two other very good assistants. A Clerk at *Rivière la Souris*, one Falcon, died in the course of the winter.

Fort Gibraltar established.

-I established a fort at the junction of the Red and Assiniboil rivers, and called it "Gibraltar", though there was not a rock or stone within three miles. I wintered at River *qui appelle* afterwards, where Big McDonell,—McDonell, Point Fortune, Ottawa,—had made his station several years. The men all knew me by sight and so did many of the Indians.....

1808.

Refitted and prepared to return to Red River or rather Assiniboil. Both are insignificant compared to the rivers Winnipeg and Saskatchewan ; however, in high water, both may be navigable for steamboats. "*Qui vivra vovra.*"

I formed an establishment further up the *Qui appelle*, at a beautiful small lake, in order to be nearer to the buffalo and the provision making Indians, and passed the winter there with Alex. McDonell ; he was only a clerk as yet.....

Attacked by Indians.

Spring came on and we prepared for our departure, intending to leave six men in charge of the fort all summer. The boats being ready and loaded, the brigade was sent off and I intended following two days after on horse back, through the plains, with Mr. Alexander McDonell. The river is small and meandering, but the water was high from the flood or melting of the snow.

In about an hour, an alarm was given that the boats had been attacked and all the men killed. I immediately sent for a horse, and, leaving Mr. McDonell in charge, I mounted, and soon met our cooper with an arrow in his cheek, and soon after two or three others. On arriving at the place where the boats were landed, I found some of the men scattered about, some wounded. I mustered all I could and, with the men sent by Mr. McDonell, crossed to the south side, the principal place of attack, and there found in one of the boats a woman, the wife of one of the men, who had himself received an arrow in the belly, but had escaped. This poor woman had been ravished, then scalped and left for dead on the shore; she had managed to crawl on board and hide herself under the covering.....

We collected the boats and the men remaining, and found three dead and as many wounded. It was now late, and we had to guard the property all night.

We started again on the third day leaving no one behind, and placed myself in the first boat, Alexander with a couple of half breeds riding along the shore and flanking us as it were. We got safe that night at the junction of the *Qui appelle* with the Assiniboil river, the poor woman and the wounded men moaning all night.

Next day, we descended a rapid stream—four knots—and reached River *La Souris*, where we learned that several war parties had been seen. Mr. Pritchard was there in command in the place of the late Mr. Falcon. We there left the wounded and started for Fort William.

At Fort William, we learned by the winter express that Mr. M. David D. Thompson, who had been across the mountains to explore the country and trade with the Snake Indians, was surrounded by Blackfeet war parties, and that he could not return as expected with his furs and for a fresh supply of goods. I offered <sup>Thompson rescued.</sup>

to go to his rescue; my offer was accepted, and full power given me to pick the best men willing to go with me.

I soon made up a crew of thirty chosen men, and Mr. J. George McTavish—who afterwards made the arrangement with Mr. Astor's party, at Astoria—and a Mr. McMillen, a steady Scotchman. We got ready as soon as possible, lightly laden, with a bold guide, Joseph Paul, an old bully.....

As we had far to go, and as time was pressing, I immediately sent off the old guide and one man with directions to proceed to *Fort de l'Isle*, there to get fresh horses to Fort Augustus, and other fresh horses to Rocky Mountain House, where he was to take a hunter, three more men, bark and other materials for the making of a couple of canoes, and proceed across the mountains by the route Mr. Thompson took, and then on the sources of River Columbia or Oregon, and have the canoes ready by the time I got there with the goods.

This was done accordingly. In the mean time, I proceeded with the brigade, accompanied by Mr. McTavish and McMillen; we were as hunters following on the prairie. We got on progressing well and got to Rocky Mountain House, where I took about thirty horses, all I could find, and sent them light by land to the sources of the Saskatchewan, where I was to leave the canoes and take the goods, &c. on horses to where I directed the guide to build canoes; I preferred taking horse myself.

It was all ups and downs, strong woods and rocks, and the route was merely an animal pathway to be followed by guess. The canoes went on with pole against a swift current and rapids running six knots.

After much labour by flood and fields we got to the first ridge of mountains. Beyond this we found a flat, perhaps twenty miles broad, smooth current if I remember well. A beautiful up hill and down dale of prairies in which we saw several "big

horns" or mountain sheep, but too wild to get a shot at. We then came by a more stiff current to the Contepais plains, so called from its being the resort of that tribe some years past.

We continued on in this beautiful plain, surrounded with perpendicular rocks many hundred feet high, and sighted several of the goat species, which we called the *Chamois* of the Rocky Mountains. We got now into very shallow and rocky currents near the canoe end of our journey, the crew on water; Mr. McTavish, three or four men and myself in charge of the horses.

As we rode along in advance and expecting to get a shot at something, I saw the form of a hat among the brushes a head, and found out it was my guide, whom I had sent in advance to prepare canoes, returning on foot with his men. He told me that, while at work, a party of about sixty Blackfeet came upon them, pillaged all they had and took their horses, arms and all; even their hunters ran from them. They thought it was useless for them to remain and they feared being murdered.

A halt was made; my companions thought that we should return to Rocky Mountain House full tilt, canoes and all, I thought otherwise. The brigade of five canoes came up and added to the story that they had seen two Indians amongst the rocks, probably the spies of the band. I immediately ordered to encamp and we kept watch all night while Mr. McMillen and myself—McTavish was too much afraid—with the hunter and two others, took horses and scoured the plains for a few miles until night fall.....

Nothing now remained but to lay the canoes up for the winter in some secure spot amongst the pine groves. On the second day we mounted or walked on. I brought up the rear and the guide, a heavy man, led the van on foot with all the men, the horses all laden with the goods, provisions, &c. We formed a very respectable caravan; the men knew the old guide Paul to



be an old veteran, "first water" and, I believe, they had no less confidence in myself.

We soon got into the defiles of the mountains and crossed the ridge which divides the waters flowing into the Pacific from those flowing into the Atlantic. We found a great change in the weather; we had half a foot of snow on the east side while on the west side we had verdure. We came to a river, with a current of perhaps four knots, flowing and meandering through a fine broad gravelly beach for a distance of about twenty miles. Here, there must be gold, to a certainty.

After travelling two days, we arrived at the spot where the party had been pillaged. They did not happen to destroy the materials and we began canoe making, to ascend and not to descend.

In five or six days we had canoes ready. The horses were sent through the woods to where they could pasture. In ascending, one of the canoes upset in the current, we lost a rôle of tobacco and a bag of balls, 90 lbs each.

My object was not to descend the river, which took an entirely northerly direction around a very high mountain which lay west of us. My business was to ascend and go south in the direction of the Snake county, where Mr. Thompson himself on Snake River.

Had I known how the country was, I would not have lost any time in making canoes, but gone on as we were with the horses. I sent back to the Rocky Mountain House most of them, retaining about twelve with which we proceeded. We were soon out of provisions, and, after travelling for three days, on the third morning we got a small deer which served only as one supper, but we knew we could not starve as we had the horses.

Next day we got into prairie ground, and soon got to a fine little lake about six miles long and one wide. Here I deter-

mined to winter with a part of the men, knowing that the Couteuais tribe would soon find us out, this being their country. Mr. McTavish went on and, next day, came upon the Couteuais camp where all was made clear. Guides were sent with Mr. McTavish to Mr. Thompson and the band came to me as it was a safeguard, and supplying me with the meat of the fallow deer all winter, hunting, dancing, singing and gambling, night and day.

This ended 1808. I here find that I have been blending two seasons into one. Leaving the Couteuais country in spring, 1810 I returned across the mountains with three or four men and by hook and crook got to Rocky Mountain House, leaving Mr. Thompson, coast clear, to follow with Mr. McTavish, Mr. McMullan remaining on Snake River (1).....

(1) The following letter from Mr. D. Thompson to Mr. Alex : Fraser, of *Rivière du Loup*, is not without interest, as it gives an idea of the risks and sufferings this distinguished geographer had to undergo during his many years of explorations in the North-West and in the Rocky Mountains. The original is in the possession of Mr. Alphonse Pouliot, advocate and Professor of Laval University, in Quebec.

21 Dec. 1810, Athabaska River,  
foot of the Mountains.

My Dear Fraser,

I received your esteemed favour the 9th Sept. and am obliged to you for the traits of civilized life and the information of my daughter. She costs me 62 £ 10 s. at present, and I think 50£ a year would do her all the good that the present sum costs me. It is my wish to give all my children an equal and good education; my conscience obliges me to it, and it is for this I am now working in this country.

I intended to have paid you a visit at Montreal this last summer, but the critical situation of our affairs in the Columbia obliged me to return. The Americans, it seems, were as usual determined to be before hand with us in the Columbia in ship navigation. As the Pégans killed an officer and 8 soldiers out of a tribe of 12 do (?), if this accident has not drove them back, they will probably get the start of me.

My canoes were also drove back by the Pégans, but no lives or property lost and I have changed our route from \_\_\_\_\_ to the Athabaska River and am now preparing in this hard season to cross the mountains and gain my first post near the head of

1812.

I had not been long at Fort William, when Colonel Wm : McKay came "express" to inform us that war had been declared by the United States against Great Britain. This was alarming, as all our furs might be taken on the route to Montreal. I had in the mean time determined to leave the country, at least visit London.

We left Fort William in the schooner Beaver, as many as she could hold; to re-enforce the small garrison of St. Joseph, which was held by some old veterans under Captain Roberts. We found on getting there that this officer, on receiving the news of the declaration of war, had resolved, with his few regulars and as many *voyageurs* and Indians as he could collect, to surprise the garrison of Makinac, which he effectually did. We went there next day and found the place in Captain Roberts' possession, the American garrison prisoners of war, and a great many Indians dancing their war dances, &c.

We remained a few days and left for Montreal.....

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the Mississourie, a march of about 34 days, and a part of it over a dangerous country for war. I hope good Providence will take care of us and bring me safe back again.

I am always in such distant expeditions that I cannot write my friends regularly. They think I slight them, but they are mistaken. It is my situation that prevents me and not negligence. I shall, after this apology, be glad to correspond with you as usual, if you have time to spare.

If all goes well and it pleases good Providence to take care of me, I hope to see you and a civilized world in the autumn of 1812. I am getting tired of such constant hard journeys; for the last 20 months I have spent only bare two months under the shelter of a hut, all the rest has been in my tent, and there is little likelihood the next 12 months will be much otherwise.

I hope you are better at your ease and that you now enjoy that society you merit, tho' I suppose you now and then cast a thought to your old friends the Chipowians who still talk of you.

Your humble servant,

DAVID THOMPSON.

MR. ALEXANDER FRASER,

Montreal.

I left Quebec in the "Isaac Todd," fur ship, with a valuable cargo, under convoy with the fall fleet numbering about forty sails, from Bique. The Isaac Todd mounted ten guns, and had a letter of marque. She sailed pretty well, being laden with light furs. We dispersed in a gale and got alone in the Mersey, from whence I took a *chaise* to London, in company with three invalided officers from Spain.....

It had been decided in council at Fort William that the Com- Expedition  
any should send the Isaac Todd to the Columbia River, where by sea to  
the Americans had established Astopia,—so named after Mr. Astoria.  
John Jacob Astor,—and that, in the mean time, a party should proceed from Fort William to meet the ship on the coast, war having been declared. This party consisted of Mr. John George McTavish and Mr. Alexander Henry, partners, with instructions to settle trading posts in different parts across the mountains, and then proceed to Astoria.

The Isaac Todd was fitted out by the House of Fraser, Mc Gillivray & Co, Suffolk Lane, Mr. Simon McGillivray being the principal agent; Mr. Donald McTavish, a proprietor of the North West Company and myself, were requested to go in that vessel as part owners and supercargos, to which we assented.

We left London in the latter end of February 1813, in company 1813. with the Honorable Edward Ellice of London, for Portsmouth, where the vessel lay under command of Captain Smith who had commanded her from Quebec, and was supposed to be a fine brave fellow. Never were people more mistaken as I found out ere long; a mere empty braggart, but a rather good sailor.

The Isaac Todd was a twenty gun letter of marque with as mongrel a crew as ever was on board a ship. It would have been better if she had had only six guns well managed, then

she might have sailed better. We had on board cannon balls enough for a line of battle ship. She proved to be a miserable sailor, with a miserable commander, a rascally crew and three mates, called first, second, third officers. We had on board half a dozen good Canadian *Voyageurs*, with a Sandwich Islander and four clerks: the *voyageurs* to make and man a canoe, the Islander to guide us into the river Columbia, where he had been before.

The Canadians having been some time on board, they requested me to grant them leave to come on shore with the Islander and the clerks, the latter all Scotch. I gave them leave but with orders to be on board in time.

The *Voyageurs* in trouble.

Messrs. Ellice, McGillivray, McTavish and myself were dining at the principal hotel when the waiter came in and told us some men wished to see us. We knew immediately who they were and Mr. McTavish expressed the wish to go on board with them; they accordingly all made for the wharf, where they found a couple of the Canadians waiting. They had all made a little free with wine and women, and took a shore boat.

They had not proceeded far when a press gang boarded them and were taking them all off to the hulk, an old 74, lying as a recruiting ship. Mr. McTavish made some resistance, saying they belonged to such and such a ship, for such and such a purpose, &c., and were all from Canada. But that would not do; the midshipman took all except Mr. McTavish himself and one of the clerks, who returned to shore.

We were still at table when Mr. McTavish came in all in a fury, telling his story and blaming me for allowing the men to come ashore. Mr. Ellice winked at me and said: "Never mind." He was brother-in-law to Earl Gray, and the Port Admiral was Earl Gray's brother.

Next morning at breakfast, Mr. Ellice handed me an order from the Admiral for the release of our men, upon which I

steered my course on board the hulk. The poor fellows had been put in close quarters all night for fear of escape. They were in a sad state of mind indeed, with the fear of being made sailors for the rest of their lives and of never seeing their fatherland again.

I presented the order to the officer on deck; he gave the necessary orders for their release, and I returned with them to the Isaac Todd, all safe after what they believed a narrow escape.

Application had been made in the course of the previous winter for a convoy; it had been granted, and the *Phœbe*, frigate of 36 guns, got ready to accompany us, the commander having received sealed orders which were to be opened only on leaving Rio de Janeiro, where he had received orders to call for supplies, water, &c.

The orders, known to us, were that at Rio I was to leave the Isaac Todd and go on board the frigate with the Sandwich Islander and four of the Canadians in case of separation from the Isaac Todd, and, in case of not meeting the party from Fort William, I might try and proceed up the Columbia. This last idea was nonsense, as I never could have got up with so few men amongst so many hostile tribes.

We sailed at the latter end of March or February under convoy with a large fleet of at least forty sails bound for all parts of the world. I had three dogs of three different breeds for use in the Columbia.....

One evening, while at *Sancta Cruz*, Tenerif, I had hardly gone to bed, when Mr. McTavish, who had gone ashore, came rushing into my cabin, roaring out: "MacDonald, you allowed the Canadians to go ashore again! they have had a dust with the Spanish guard and half of them are taken prisoners, and we will lose our men."

The fact was that the Spanish guard thought they were some of the French prisoners making their escape.....

.....A scuffle ensued in which the *voyageurs* were wounded and locked up, but they were soon after released on their identity being made out.

.....  
 We came to anchor in the harbour of Rio, where we found an admiral's ship, a 74, and some smaller vessels. We had, as well as the frigate, to take in fresh water, biscuit, &c.

One day—we had been here a month—Captain Hilliar (1) sent for Mr. McTavish and myself, representing that he had learned that the "Essex", American frigate much his own strength, was in the North Pacific and had fitted out a fine British whaler as a sloop of war of 20 guns, and that in case of falling with them that both would be too much for him. That the Isaac Todd would be of no use as she was such a dull sailor and so poorly manned. He requested of us, as British merchants, owners of the Isaac Todd, to draw out a writing to the Admiral (Rear Admiral Dixon) requesting him to send an additional force with the Phœbe.....

The Admiral sent for us, and the result of the conference was that he would forward a report to the Admiralty, and that he would send the two sloops of war then cruising off Cape Horn and then expected into port daily.....

In a few days we prepared to sail, viz: the Phœbe, the Chérub, 20 guns, and the Racoon, 20 guns.....

Signals were made to sail after noon; the Isaac Todd ahead....

.....  
 It had been settled in London that, when out of Rio, I was to leave the Isaac Todd and go on board the frigate in case of

(1) Hillyer.

separation and take three or four Canadians with me with our necessaries.

When fairly out, Captain Hilliar sent a boat and I left the Isaac Todd without regret. The novelty of the thing and the hopes of meeting the Essex pleased me. I was well received on board by Captain Hilliar and officers, my cot strung amongst the guns, &c.

We had very rough weather off the Faulkland Islands, and were nearly six weeks before we could double Cape Horn, and were driven half way to the Cape of Good-Hope. We lost sight of the Isaac Todd in a gale; our rendez-vous was Juan Fernandez. We at last doubled the Cape under top sails. It was winter there, the deck was one sheet of ice for six weeks and our sails one frozen sheet.

We turned our faces northward as if towards home and we made for Juan Fernandez, Robinson Crusoe's island, where we cast anchor. Shore boats came to us with junk beef and some milk tasting and smelling garlic: we did not like it.

The next morning, about noon, the captains of the three ships, the purser and the doctor of the frigate and myself went ashore. We were met by two fat priests, who hugged and kissed us. This is a penal colony, with a jail which would not keep an Irishman twenty four hours.

We were conducted to Government House; we met His Excellency in the balcony. He hugged us as had done the priests and then we were ushered into a large hall, where we saw his lady, quite young and handsome—his second wife—and four beautiful daughters. His Excellency was himself a very fine man, six feet high.

They could speak neither English nor French and we could not speak Spanish, so that the conversation finished where it



began. We had to send for a sailor who spoke a little Spanish, and in the course of the conversation we learned that the Essex and her consort had lately left the main shore, Valparaiso, and had gone north. Our stay here was about one week, but no Isaac Todd!

Captain Hillar having here perused some accounts of the entrance of the Columbia River, found that the bar was too shallow to admit his frigate. He, therefore, requested me to draw out a letter to him representing this, and giving it as my opinion that his only way was to put me on board of one of the sloops of war, and to detach that sloop to the Columbia, while he would himself go in search of the Essex.

He accordingly sent me and the Canadians on board the sloop Racoon, Captain Black, while he was to conduct us far enough to be safe from the Essex.....

Explosion  
on board.

One day, Captain Black told me at dinner that the guns had not been fired since he had left Rio, and that they would be scaled after dinner, that is fired off and reloaded. The first lieutenant began at the forward bow gun; I was near him and followed him from gun to gun as they were fired. One gun broke its fastening and recoiled a great deal. We got on to the tenth on the starboard side; I saw the priming take fire and some of the contents of the gun going off. It communicated with the bags of powder for reloading which were fixed over the gun.

The explosion was immediate from gun to gun and to the marines' powder horns along the beams of the deck. The groans of twenty six scorched men, of whom I was one, were immediately heard. I stood it however, and, recollecting that the companion stairs to the upper deck were near me on my right, I went up and met Captain Black, who was upon deck. He enquired

of me what was the matter and I replied that I knew not. I was dressed in nankeen, which was all on fire, but I found that my eyes were safe.

The smoke soon cleared away, my cot was strung up, and I was put to bed. My Canadians said that live fire had come out by the port holes. The deck was raised a little, but not to damage the ship. I lay in bed, my wounds were dressed. As I had my hat and gloves off at the time, my head took fire and the back of it could not have been known from my face had it not been for my conspicuous nose. My hands, as well as several parts of my body, legs, &c., were burnt, particularly at the seams of my clothes.

We lay in our cots and hammocks for weeks with the most excruciating pains; the groans of the sailors were pitiful, and some swore to excess. Three or four days after the accident I became delirious; I had, however, a great advantage, my hammock being hung in the Captain's cabin, the lights open for air, and I was more closely attended by the surgeon and by my men.

In a few days, salve and linen were all exhausted, there was a sufficiency on board for the ordinary requirements of a war sloop, but not for such wholesale burning .....

My Sandwich Islander was at one of the guns; he saw the explosion and instantly threw himself down and saved himself, except the tip of his nose.

When I was out of danger the doctor told me, one morning, while dressing me, that Jack Grant, one of my men, an Orkney man, had died of his wounds and that some other men were dead, that I had been the worst burnt of all but one, and that my temperance habits had saved me.

.....

.....

.....

Astoria.

We got to the Columbia, as mentioned by Washington Irving on the 30th November, 1813, and anchored in Baker's Bay on a beautiful evening. The savages came on board from their villages to trade their fish. I was now able to walk on deck supported by some of the officers.....

The morning after our arrival, we saw a bark canoe coming towards us from Astoria. It came alongside and I at once recognized Mr. McDougal and my old men. They came on board and told us all the news; I was in such a state that they scarcely knew me until I shook hands with them, calling them by their names.

Washington Irving is in some part correct, but not in one principal part. I heard of no expectation of prize money, nor disappointment in any respect. The force was sent to fulfil a duty to the North-West Company; It was no government measure. They were as it were under my directions as a Partner of that Company, and acted accordingly.

We settled with Mr. McDougal that we should land next day at about six miles from Astoria, and take possession in George's name. Matters being so settled, Mr. McDougal and his crew, — half a dozen fine *voyageurs*, — returned to Astoria. Several Natives came on board with fish. I think Concomly, their chief, was with them.

Next day, the ship's long boat was manned and Captain Black, a midshipman and myself, with the boat's complement of men, we steered for Astoria, where we found the North-West Gentlemen and the Astorians ready to receive us. To our utter disappointment, we found only a few stores and barracks surrounded by a few imperfect stockades with two or three swivels mounted near the gate. The place was not fit to resist any thing but savages. Concomly, if I remember right, was there with a few Indians.

Captain Black took a bottle of wine, or perhaps something stronger, broke it against the flag staff, hoisted the Union Jack and called it "Fort George," and, after taking lunch, returned on board of his own vessel. My *voyageurs* and baggage were sent for and Capt. Black remained in the harbour a few days for favorable weather, and then left.

I understood later that he struck on the bar, put into San Francisco for repairs and there met the Isaac Todd which gave him great assistance. Here Washington Irving ends his story.

I was senior Partner at Astoria and in command. There were here also: John George McTavish, Alexander Henry, John Stewart, Alexander Stewart, North-West partners, with some clerks and men; and of Astor's party: John Clark, Mr. McDougal, Mr. Stewart, Donald McKenzie, partners, and several clerks and men. Climate mild with rain and little frost, plenty of fish, particularly sturgeon; one of five hundred pounds weight was brought in. There were also provisions from the Sandwich Islands.

During the month of December, a couple of canoes, with a dozen men under Mr. Alexander Stewart, was sent up to the inland posts with supplies. They were attacked by Indians, one man was killed and Mr. Stewart badly wounded in the back with an arrow; he never well recovered from this wound. The goods were pillaged and the party driven back. In consequence, a second strong party was sent under J. G. McTavish and Mr. Henry to recover the property and revenge the attack. They recovered part of the goods by taking a chief prisoner and keeping him till all that could be got was collected (1).

(1) See: "Adventures on the Columbia," by Ross Cos, Vol. I, page 269

In the month of April all was ready for our departure for the interior posts with supplies, and I started with the Astorians for Fort William across the mountains, leaving Mr. Henry and Mr. McDougal in command at Astoria, in hopes of the arrival of the Isaac Todd, which vessel did arrive after our departure, having wintered at San Francisco. Both he and Mr. Donald McTavish, who had left London with me, were drowned in the Columbia in leaving the fort and in going on board to Baker's Bay, where the ship lay at anchor.

I proceeded then up the river with canoes and boats and about eighty men with two swivels; I feared nothing. We were generally under sail, the south-east wind being prevalent.....

On nearing the mountains we got scarce of provisions; we bought horses and found them equal to beef. As we made progress several of the party struck off to the different posts, while I proceeded with the others to the Mountains.

Here we left the canoes and began a mountain pass. We got over the first chain on high ground, fell into a level, the river at a current of about six knots, with a gravelly bottom, where I am sure gold abounds. The river meanders much and we cut the points as it would have made a long journey of it.

We therefore made a straight cut of it, holding by one another by twos or threes, wading sometimes up to our hips in water, dashing in, frozen at one point, and coming out thawed at the opposite point and frozen again before we dashed in again. Thus we arrived at the height of land, our men carrying our blankets, provisions, &c. on their backs.

It took us, I think, fairly four days hard work before we got fairly out of the mountains to Jasper Haws' (1) House, at a small lake, the source of the Athabasca River, sometimes camping

Jasper  
House.

(1) A clerk of the North West Company.

on snow twenty feet deep, so that the fires we made in the evening were fifteen feet or twenty feet below us next morning. At one encampment we went below and camped at the bottom very comfortably for that night.

One of my men on the east side of the mountains broke his leg, I had to splinter it the best I could and left him with one man till he got well to reach Jasper's House.

I remained a couple of days at this post to rest ourselves and to prepare a canoe, paddles, &c, then departed, descending a stiff current at the rate of six or seven knots an hour. Next day, we got at the entrance at Pembina River. I was here at home as it were, having been there some two or three years before.

We ascended the Pembina for two days till we got to Pembina Portage, where we left our canoe, and with our "all" on the men's backs, we proceeded on the Portage, a mere trail half way wood and half way prairies with small lakes, plenty of game: swans, geese, ducks, prairie hens. Next day we got across sixty miles, very much tired, to Fort Augustus.....

At Fort Augustus, I prepared a canoe in a couple of days and re-embarked once more on the noble Saskatchewan and we were soon amongst the buffaloes, deers and bears, &c., but no time was to be lost, as the season was advanced. We proceeded on to Fort William to report proceedings since leaving Portsmouth in the Isaac Todd.

Having determined to retire from the country and having no department to attend to at Fort William, I requested a canoe with retiring voyageurs, and I embarked for Montreal with the Astorians.

About half way to Sault St Mary's, we met, or rather saw at a distance, a small canoe coasting along: we made towards it.

and found it to be Captain McCargo and two *voyageurs*—captain of the schooner on the lake.

He reported that he had made his escape and was bound for Fort William, to give the information that the Sault establishment had been burned down by the enemy, the horses all burnt alive and his schooner taken. The stores had been taken and all they could not take was burnt.

I told him to proceed while I would continue and ascertain whether the enemy had gone away, or if they were laying in wait to make a prize of the furs then ready to the amount of one hundred pounds sterling, and to inform the Hon. William McGillivray, who was the principal agent. If I found none of the enemy at Sault St Mary I would proceed on Lake Huron and ascertain if the lake was clear of war vessels, and I would act according to circumstances, and that if there was danger I would meet them or let them know. I knew that with only one canoe I could escape them (1).

I got to the Sault and found all as he described, every thing burnt, even the horses. I remained here a night and proceeded to Lake Huron and met a small canoe on the lake proceeding westward. I overhauled it and found it to be Mr. Franks, an old Mackinac trader and four Indians with a dozen fresh American scalps. They were bound for Mackinac, which was in our possession.

Mr. Franks having seen nothing on the lake, I proceeded to French River, the route for canoes to Montreal, and encamped at the mouth of the river, where I could see any thing which might occur.

(1) Franchère, in his "*Relation d'un voyage à la côte Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique Septentrionale, en 1810-11-12-13-14*," says that the returns of the North-West Company for 1814 amounted to £200,000, and were carried in forty seven large canoes and were escorted by more than three hundred well armed men, to defend them against the Americans.

In a couple of days, a boat under sail came round the point eastward. I immediately ordered my canoe and half a dozen men in the water. While doing so, a second boat appeared and I determined on ascertaining who they were, and told the other gentlemen to let Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ know the facts if I was taken prisoner.

I pushed with all the power I could to the boats, which by this time had passed on under sail and were ahead of me. I fired a shot ahead of them and they took down sail, and, to my joy, saw an officer of the Navy with the British buttons.

He had commanded an armed schooner. Two American schooners met him; he got into Natasagné River where he thought he might be safe, but they manned their boats, took his vessel, and he and his crew made their escape in the boats and were on their way to Makinac.....

He had not gone much farther when he met the brigade keeping near shore so as to be out of sight and have easy access to the islands if the enemy appeared. In the evening, all arrived safe at French River.....

It appears that, soon after the two boats had left or parted with the brigade,—perhaps 25 miles further up the lake,—the two schooners had cast anchor abreast of a certain point where nothing could escape being seen and taken. It being now dark the lieutenant and his two boats got passed without observation. He remarked their position and proceeded to Makinac, where he prepared in a short time boats and volunteers to attack the two vessels. He left Mackinac in the afternoon, and concealed his party and boats behind a point of land till the hour he thought best for the attack.

Capture of two American sloops.

Colonel William McKay was of the party with some voyageurs—as brave a man as ever was on earth—a partner also of the North-West Company. He related to me the circumstances.



Before day light, the party directed their course to the vessel, unobserved. At day break, they saw but one vessel; it appears that the other had been despatched to the Sault as an additional surety that the furs would be intercepted. The latter vessel, it appears, had gone to the Sault and found that all had passed safe about two hours before. This hastened their return to their consort.

In the mean time, the Mackinac party pushed on, came along side and were fired upon. But they boarded and carried her, pinning, as McKay said, some of the crew with their fixed bayonets to the deck. Having made all secure and snug they laid quiet at anchor, expecting the return of the other from the Sault.

They had not been more than four hours in this situation when they saw the other returning. They lay quiet, prevented any signals; the vessel cast anchor at leeward. Upon this they raised anchor quietly and bore down upon the late arrival, poured in a broadside and boarded. They, without much loss, they took both schooners and brought them to Mackinac.....

I was once more in Montreal; I left off the idea of going to England, and passed the winter amidst gaiety, amusements and feasting.

1815.

The North-West Company were then in the height of their troubles with the Earl of Selkirk, who now found that making out his outfits—he was blended with the Hudson's Bay Company in the fur trade—from Lachine brought his men in too close intercourse with the North-West Company. He determined to alter his plans and pitched upon Terrebonne for his head quarters, where men, goods, canoes, &c. were conveyed. Messrs

Colin Robertson, John Clark and some others acted as chiefs under the Earl.

There were in the village of Terrebonne about four hundred *voyageurs* fitting out for the Hudson's Bay territory by way of Fort William. They had possession on an inn, a good large house, kept by one Allard. Colonel McKay was owner of this inn and Allard's lease was now expiring, if I remember right, on the 1st of May.

This party, headed by Robertson and Clark, formerly clerks of the North-West Company, who had been some years before under my command in the North, but whom the Company had discharged, became very troublesome, dangerous, and insulting in the village, making it dangerous to any one connected with the North-West Company to pass the streets.

There were in the village several families connected with that Company: The Hon. Roderick McKenzie, an old partner, Mr. Chaboillez, Mr. David Thompson; Mr. James McKenzie of Quebec, was also there at that time.

Colonel McKay's lease to Allard being to expire next day, I was requested by the Hon. W. McGillivray and others of the N. W. Co. to go out and try and dispossess Lord Selkirk's party of the inn, giving me an instrument in writing to that effect. I undertook the task and took a calash and carter next morning.

We got to Terrebonne, I stopped at my first acquaintance's house, the late Mr. Thompson, and Mrs. Chaboillez's house was nigh. I, of course, told my errand; after half an hour conversation I moved to go through the village, both those gentlemen objected, saying I would be mobbed and abused, as I had to pass the inn to get to Mr. McKenzie's house, where I intended to dine.

This could not prevent my purpose, I passed without any hesitation. After dinner, I was warned against attempting to

get possession of the inn, I said I had come out for that purpose, and whatever might happen I must act as expected. I took my hat, no one moved to accompany me but Mr. James McKenzie, a brave fellow.

We had not far to go down street when we came to the house. There were inside and outside about three hundred *voyageurs*, and some bullies among them, we were told. The house was a two story house of stone; inside, a half dozen steps from the bar room.

I mounted these steps when I was pushed very resolutely; had it not been that Mr. McKenzie was close behind, I would have fallen upon my back, but he bore me up. I had a cane in my hand, sharp point of steel containing also a small sword. I did not draw it but pointing the steel point before me I remounted at a rush the steps again and made my entrance good with Mr. McKenzie.

The bar room was full of men. I enquired for Mr. Allard; he was not to be found. His wife was within the bar. I said I had come to take possession and got my writing out of my pocket. She said she would take no writing; I then read it, when having done so, I said the house must be clear when I came back next morning. I made my way out, all hands making a clear passage for me.....

I then went in search of a magistrate, could find none to take one Morin, their bully who pushed me back; all had left the village. Next morning, I took my carter and calash and passed by the inn, all was quiet and in two days all had gone up Lake of Two Mountains and the village was clear of them.....

I have thus, my dear de Bellefeuille, written you this brief sketch in my 86th year.

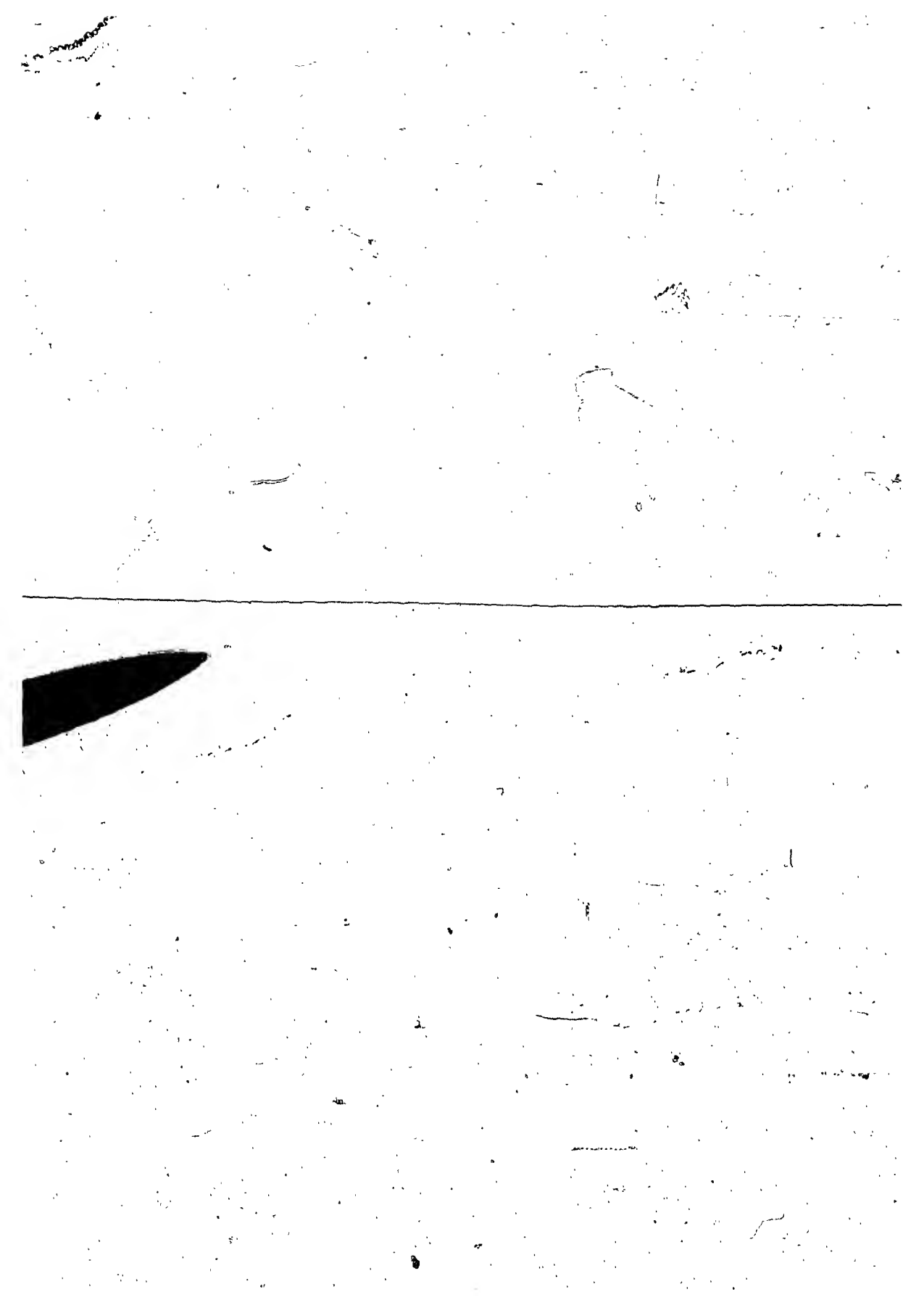
It may naturally be expected that, at that age, the memory is gone. If I was to write it over with some more reflexion, I could spin it out at three times the length. Many incidents occur to my memory which I had forgotten as I went along. The whole is a plain, unvarnished tale and unadorned language ; all matter of fact. Dates may be wrong, but that will not alter facts. As my business was not with others, there is in this, egotism which I could not avoid ; your wishes are what interested me.



Your affectionate father,

John McDONALD,

26th March 1859.



MR. GEORGE KEITH

LETTERS

TO

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MR. RODERIC MCKENZIE

1807-1817

THE MACKENZIE RIVER AND  
GREAT BEAR LAKE DEPARTMENTS



#### THE MOUNTAIN RIVER, *RIVIÈRE AUX LIARDS*.

The country.—*Rivière aux Liards*.—The Beaver Indians; a better class of Indians; their kindness to their women.—Vocabulary.—Beaver Indian songs and tales: "The Flood."—"The Man in the Moon," &c.—Their religion and ideas of justice.—Social life.—Quarrels with the Hudson Bay people.—Starvation.

#### GREAT BEAR LAKE.

The Rocky Mountain.—Mineral productions; salt springs.—Trees and shrubs.—Ice banks; intense cold.

The Natives, the "Red Knives."—Abject condition of their women.—Religion and morality.—Interior economy and habitations, &c.

#### THE FILTHY LAKE.

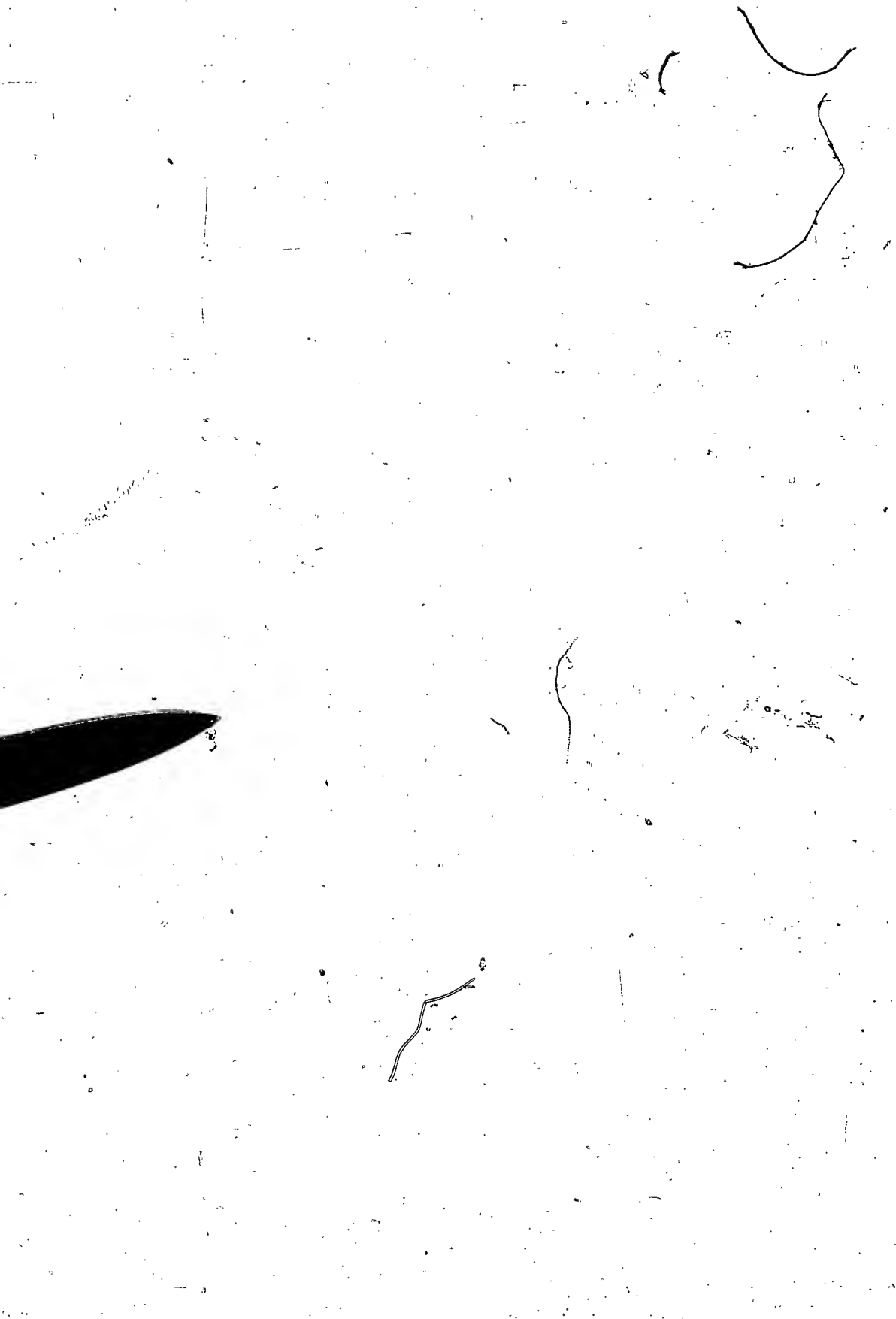
The natives; their dread of the Red Knives.—Respect for and care of the aged.—Individual preeminence.—Early marriages and degrees of affinity.—Freedom granted to women.—Trade and interior economy.—Winter habitations.

#### THE LONG-ARROWED INDIANS.

Their country; the climate.—Improvvidence of the Natives; their powers of endurance.—The trade.

Confession among the Beaver Indians.—Murder of Alexander Henry.—Quarrels with the Earl of Selkirk.





MR. GEORGE KEITH: (1)

LETTERS TO

MR. RODERIC MCKENZIE.

MacKenzie's River Department, January 7th, 1807.

Roderick MacKenzie, Esq.,

Sir,

I received your obliging letter last Fall, and cannot reflect without pleasure upon the honour it would do me, if I could in the least contribute to your laudable undertaking; at the same time, I am grieved to find that you have taken the trouble to address me upon such a subject, conscious of my inability with

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(1) Mr. George Keith—the brother, I believe, of Mr. James Keith, who was for many years Chief Factor of the Hudson Bay Company at Laehine—passed most of his life in the dreary departments of the North: Athabaska, Mackenzie River and Great Bear Lake. At the coalition of the Hudson Bay and North-West Companies, in 1821, he became a Chief Trader of the combined concern, and continued in the North-West fur trade till 1842, when he left for Scotland, where he died, leaving one daughter married to a Mr. Swanston.

Mrs. Swanston died in Montreal, and left an only son, Mr. Thomas Swanston, still living at Prince-Albert, in the North-West Territories.

the pen, as also my imperfect knowledge regarding any thing of consequence in this quarter. Add to this the ignorance and stupidity of the Natives, circumstance which, I hope, will excuse the imperfect idea given by me upon the subject.

The  
country.

This establishment may be reckoned at ten days march by water from the mouth of the river. It is situated upon the north side of the river, between two small rivers. The country, bordering upon the Rocky Mountains, scarcely a day's march from this establishment, in a south-easterly direction, is woody and irregular; the soil is sandy and deep. Upon the south side of the river, the country is pretty level and covered with fir, birch, poplar, alder, willow and *bois rouge*; there are *poire*, gooseberry and raspberry bushes; the former are very scarce and the latter ripen about the 15th to the 20th of August.

Animals.

Large animals consist of the moose deer, and the wild goat; the latter is to be found only upon the Rocky Mountains, and is much the same as in Europe, though smaller and without beard; their hair is short and white, their flesh very good and surprisingly fat, when killed in the proper season. The lesser species or fur kinds are: the black and-grizzled bear, the latter inhabits the Rocky Mountains or thereabouts, and are apparently not so ferocious as those in the Peace River, beaver, otter, lynx, marten, mink, ermine, wolverine, muskrat, wolf, &c. The Natives kill the most part of these animals by running them down with dogs until fatigued; they afterwards make use of bows and arrows or guns. They sometimes entangle them in snares made of green cords. They kill the beaver and wolverine for the most part with traps, and the others with snares. The method by which they entice the moose deer into the snare is performed thus: they clear a narrow road by felling the underwood and placing it on each side of the road so as to make an impediment for the animal to get in; in this road they leave small openings

here and there upon each side, into which they set their snares with a piece of wood five or six feet long tied to the end of the snare, in order to entangle the animal in the thick woods, when taken. The beaver traps are constructed on the lodge where the beaver appear to be most employed.

This establishment abounds with small lakes, some of which are very rich in fish, such as white fish, trout, pike and *doré*, &c. The Natives make use of nets made of the fine bark of the willow, twisted and plaited about the size of Holland twine; it is stronger and preferable to net thread, particularly when prepared in winter, they likewise angle with hooks made of bone.

This river, denominated by the Natives, *Rivière de Liard*, (1) The Rivière aux Liards. discharges its waters into Mackenzie's river, but it is not known where it takes its sources. It is pretty broad all along, but is generally very shallow and rapid. About one and a half days march from MacKenzie's river, it becomes a continuation of rapids for upwards five leagues, and so shallow from one side of the river to the other, that some years, in the Fall, a canoe loaded with six or eight pieces, cannot proceed without making an almost continual portage. Within this distance there is only one portage, about twenty paces long, occasioned by a cascade which crosses the river. In spring and in the beginning of summer there are none, but the navigation is very difficult on account of the strength of the current. The banks all along and on each side of these rapids, are very high and perpendicular, consisting of broken rocks. There are other rapids further up, but of little consequence.

About a day's march above the rapids, the river presents a fine view to the traveller; the Rocky Mountain to the north, and a

(1) Formerly called "Grand River Forks," and "Mountain River" by the whites; and *The-ta-desse*, River between rocks, by the Natives.

fine level country all along to the south, interspersed with small rivers and islands, neither of which of any note, except the *Biskag-ha* River, or Sharp Edge River, not far distant from the Fort, and so called from the flint stones very common in that place, and which the old inhabitants, the *Nà ha né* tribe, made use of as knives and axes. This tribe of Indians has abandoned the country on account of the encroachments of its present possessors.

The Beaver  
Indians;  
their  
origin.

The Natives of this establishment call themselves "Beaver Indians," a name which they claim as descendants from the Beaver Indians of Peace River, from whom they were separated some ages ago, when attacked by enemies. The terror caused by this sudden attack induced them to fly for safety to the north-westward. The reason they also give for the origin of their name is that they generally were and are still clothed with beaver skins. I cannot determine upon this point, as I am ignorant of the language, but the original language of this tribe does not sound like the modern Beaver Indian language of the Natives about Peace River. (1)

Population

I am uninformed as to their ancient population in old times, but those now residing about this establishment amount to 46 married men, 16 bachelors or young men, 38 children of the male sex, and 32 girls, so that the number of souls in all is 178. According to them, the population has increased since the establishment of *McKenzie's* River by the whites, who have protected them from the inroads of other tribes, which previously killed numbers of them.

Game  
Laws.

These Indians are very honest, with regard to property, and are extremely particular respecting their hunting regulations.

(1) See Wentzel's letters, 1st series.

For instance, when an Indian discovers one or more beaver lodges, if not already appropriated, he immediately puts a mark upon them, and no one dares to intrude upon his property without his permission, although I know of no punishment inflicted upon the guilty party unless it be the infamy attached to the action, which is considered as very mean and heinous. At the same time they are by no means of a hoggish disposition; the best hunter of large animals, when with his relations, has the smallest share of what he kills. They assist one another with provisions when in want, and their principal food consists of hares, beavers and moose deer, generally roasted. They begin to be pretty expert in killing the latter with guns, particularly in summer, but they cure its meat very badly; they often eat putrified meat, but are very cleanly with their dishes.

In general, they are pretty industrious and good economists <sup>A better class of Natives.</sup> in many respects. Their principal amusement is dancing, being generally averse to gaming unless rich in ammunition, when they will venture to stake a ball or so against its value. They are ignorant, without being superstitious, and ungovernable in some respects by their chiefs, whom they obey only in hopes of being recompensed. They are of middle stature and of an inoffensive disposition. They appear to have no idea of a supernatural Being; however, they seem to entertain some conception of a future state, alleging that the dead must penetrate through the earth, after which they find a large lake, which being crossed, a new world is found in which they hope to find their ancestors with whom they begin life anew.

Cohabiting is only forbidden to mother and son, brother and sister. Brothers cohabit with one another's women openly. <sup>The Kindness to women.</sup> Women are indulged with every thing attainable, without being subjected to any brutal treatment or hard menial labour, as many other tribes in this country. In short, they are a very friendly

tribe, sympathizing for their sick and aged, whom they never abandon, carrying them about—without distinction of age or sex—upon their shoulders, in their different peregrinations. Their only vice, in my opinion, is lying, which they always practised, (although not so much as formerly) very often with a view to prejudice one another in the opinion of the whites, notwithstanding the many remonstrances of the latter against this practice.

Thus I have endeavoured to give a short sketch of some particulars relating to this corner, (commerce, &c, excepted, which I humbly leave to the decision of a more accurate and better judge, as far as my knowledge and ability will admit. Upon which account I again request you will be kind enough to excuse the deficiency of the present from

Sir,

Your very obedient

and humble servant,

GEORGE KEITH.

## VOCABULARY. (1)

Father.....	Téhé.
Mother.....	Anna.
My son.....	Cetcheñ.
My daughter.....	Cet-hufé.
Brother.....	Coonega.
Husband.....	Ced-dinnah.
Sister.....	Sadeté.
Wife.....	Cetsickhé.
Head.....	Cet-thi.
Nose.....	Cinsie.
Eyes.....	Cinaché.
Fear.....	Cet-segg.
Thus.....	Tet-chin.
Fish.....	Thlu yah.
To sleep.....	Acht-hé.
I.....	Cenné.
Thou.....	Nimmé.
To eat.....	Net-hé.
River.....	Desse.
Mountain.....	Sheuth.
To drink water.....	Tou-heddon.
Carry.....	Yic-Yech.
Stupid.....	Guyion-kité.
White.....	Te-cuthlé.
Black.....	Tenet-thlets.
Red.....	Tetsid.

(1) See the vocabulary given by M. Wentzel in his letters. Although these Indians may be the same tribe as those inhabiting the mouth of *Liard River*, it will be observed that the language is considerably different.



Lying.....	Waosé.
Pain .....	Allijeh.
Lagy .....	Toucin-cien.
Ice .....	Tchin.
Day .....	Zinich.
Night.....	Echlijé.
Summer .....	Jimbih.
Winter.....	Yach-géh.
Autumn.....	Tech-tsellé.
Spring.....	Issegeh.
Earth.....	Déeh.
One.....	Thiadedé.
Two.....	Ouk-hi-didté.
Three .....	Tahé.
Four.....	Tingeh.
Five.....	Lachethé.
Six .....	Etsingtahe.
Seven .....	Etsingtahe-gesethlizeh.
Eight.....	Etsing-tingeth.
Nine.....	Et-thligéh-dacie.
Ten.....	Ghonenno.
Twenty.....	Ouk, hi-ghonenno.
Thirty.....	Tahe ghenenno.
Forty.....	Tingeh ghenenno.
To day.....	Douch ko.

N. B.—The above vocabulary may be pronounced according to the french Alphabet.

MacKenzie's River Department, 25th Nov. 1807.

Roderic MacKenzie, Esq.,

Dear Sir,

Your obliging and kind favor of the 10th July I duly received, and am happy to find that you seem pleased with the idea given in my last, regarding my winter quarters. I could wish that my little knowledge of the natural secrets of the Athabasca could be deemed worthy to be communicated. My first years in this country were spent not much to my own improvement, either with regard to my occupation, and much less in searching into the natural secrets of the country, both of which depend greatly the one on the other. I lacked the proper qualifications and opportunities and, some times, the example, which, then, might have been of some service to me and much more since. I do not know any thing that might further illustrate the description formerly given of this place, and having been lashed to it for many succeeding years, I find myself entirely incapable of ushering out of it, as I could only give a very imperfect idea of any other place.

Respecting tales, traditions and songs, I have been able to pick up only a few of the former ; I have chosen those I thought to be the best, which you will find enclosed. The translation is literal, as far as the idiom would permit, but I imagine you will not find them worthy to be exposed in print, however improved and corrected.

Beaver Indian tales  
and songs.

The songs are a composition of incoherent sounds, generally made in imitation of some wild animal, such as the bear, wolverine, &c. ; many are borrowed from other tribes, and all are accompanied with a dance on great occasions. The love songs are upon a similar strain, but not so rude. The lamentation song, upon the death of a relative, mentions the different names of the members of the deceased, including the organs of speech and not omitting, if a male..... I ought to remark that each word, with the chorus, forms a *couplet* :

I shall, with pleasure, continue my communication annually so long as it may not become irksome or unworthy of your notice ; but I shall do my best and no one can do more I therefore flatter myself that this confession will be sufficient excuse from

Dear Sir, with the greatest respect

Your very obedient and humble servant

GEORGE KEITH.

The following is the substance of two Beaver Indian tales, literally translated, as far as the idiom of the language, and the capacity of the translator will permit.

The Indian  
Hercules !

Formerly there was an old man of a singular character who, together with some others of his tribe, in some of their excursions, used to overhear as if it were the barking of a dog, but in fact it was found to be a human creature in the form of a monster, who employed every artifice to entice the curious and unwary stranger to his habitation, in hope of killing him. This detestable practise continued to be carried on for a long time

with great success till, at length, the old man above mentioned, suspecting something very extraordinary had befallen his relatives, proposed to go in quest of them, and accordingly went and happened, without being observed, to espy the destroyer of his relatives.

He found him to be like another man, with this difference that he had a tail like a dog hanging from his posterior. This monster had a wife who lived at the foot of a very high precipice, he himself generally remaining, in the day time, upon the top, and when any human being happened to approach him, he suddenly attacked and rolled them down the precipice, his wife giving the finishing blow to his existence, after which the victim was served up as food to these monsters.

The old man discovered himself to the monster, who accosted him saying he had first discovered him, and that he must come to him. The old man replied that he lied, for he had seen him long before on the top of the precipice, barking like a dog. However, the old man, not being intimidated, advanced while the other secreted a large stone—the usual weapon of his barbarity—between his body and shirt, but not having his belt girt, the stone dropped to his feet just as the old man came to close quarters, which the latter observing, furiously attacked the monster and tumbled him down the precipice. The wife, unsuspecting and without examining further, fell upon her husband and put an end to his existence, which the old man no sooner perceived than he descended the precipice and approached the old woman, who was dissembling her sorrow, and asked him from whence he came. “I wander about”, replied he. “Look upward,” says she, having a sharp pointed bone to stab him if he should lift his eyes upwards; but the old man, suspecting her treachery, interrupted her and told her that the ermine was eating the grease behing her, whereupon, turning about to save the grease, she was killed by the old man.

Such was the tragical end of the monster. The old man performed many more actions of the same nature and was looked upon as immortal.

Another  
tale.

There was a man and his wife. The former went out hunting, and, during his absence, a strange Indian arrived and carried away his woman. Upon the route, they arrived at a large lake which they crossed in a canoe, and after walking a long time he arrived with his prey amongst his relations, who, according to custom, lived upon bad putrified meat, which the woman, not being accustomed to such food, found very unpalatable.

One day, her ravisher being out hunting, a young girl came to visit her, and the conversation happening to turn on their bad living, the young visitor inveighed bitterly against it, and asked the other if she had a brother with her relations, and was answered in the affirmative. "Well", says she, "let us escape and go to your relatives." "Why," replied the other, "you laugh at me..." "No! I will fetch my bag," answered she, "and deceive my mother by telling her that I wish to sleep with you, and we will desert in the night;" which she accordingly did, and both set off the same night.

After travelling very far they found a very broad lake: "How shall we cross over this lake?" says the married woman, "we have no canoe?" "Courage!" replied the other, fetching her bag, out of which she took two feathers, and placing them in the form of a cross upon the waters, "come" says she, "let us look for berries." When they returned they found in place of the two feathers, a fine canoe with paddles, by which means they soon crossed the lake. Their provision being soon consumed, the married woman began to despond, which the other

remarking demanded a *pichou* snare which she took and set in the woods, and the next day visiting the snare found a large moose deer stifled in it, which marvellous circumstance enabled them to continue their journey, and the happiness of both was complete, the one in being restored to her husband, and the other in being united in matrimony to the brother of her travelling companion.

P. S. I was about inserting another but was interrupted by a parcel of Indians. I dare not retard the express any longer. I hope the two former will serve as a specimen as well as half a dozen.

Your humble servant

GEORGE KEITH.

Roderic MacKenzie Esq.

MacKenzie's River Department, 1st Dec. 1808.

Rod. MacKenzie, Esq.

Dear Sir,

Indian  
tales.

Your kind letter of the 1st July was duly handed to me very late last fall. I am happy that the tales, from their novelty, are passable. I have this year enclosed two more, which I flatter myself will be more acceptable. The one treats of a flood, and is as correctly translated from the original as I possibly could. In my opinion, it is a little singular invention of those Indians, and I assure you it is genuine, as I had it from an old woman who never had any communication with the Red Knives or Chipewyans. That such a flood happened is readily and firmly believed by those of the Natives who know the tale, but it is not generally known among them.

The other is short, and I believe of no further consequence than that it shows that the Natives are apt to endeavour to trace into the origin of things. I wished to transcribe some more, as it is an agreeable pastime, besides the satisfaction it gives me to think that you would be sensible to my assiduity to complete your desire, but I could not find any acceptable, because they are generally nonsensical or full of obscenity.

I have looked over your memorandum several times, and I am sorry to find that I cannot add any information of consequence to what is mentioned in a former letter. There are many words that my dictionary does not explain. I should have

contributed willingly as much as possible to the collection of songs, but I have met with a disappointment in a necessary article, which deprives me of the pleasure of forwarding any thing of the kind this winter, and indeed you do not lose much, for I am a great drone myself, and my men this year are little better, so that we are well coupled in this respect.

Trade at this post is decreasing considerably; we were Trade upwards of ten packs short last spring, and it is evident that the ensuing return will be considerably less. This decrease is principally due to a quarrel which unfortunately happened last spring betwixt the Natives of this post and a strange tribe of Indians inhabiting the Rocky Mountains. Two of the Indians of this post being in pursuit of two young men of that tribe who fled (the others had remained to their lodges and had already made peace), one of the former, a cracked-brained fellow, fired with shot upon his companions and severely wounded him. To atone for this accident, he returned to the stranger's camp, where his relatives were peaceably seated, and instantly shot one of the strangers. In short, confusion now prevailed, and the Beaver Indians, dreading the resentment of the others, poured several discharges upon the feeble and innocent *Tritki-da-ha, tiné* or *Gens d'Original*, and 22 of the latter, including men, women and children were barbarously slaughtered.

Sickness also has been very prevalent amongst the Indians of this post since last spring, several of which (excellent hunters) have visited the shades below. I shall trouble you with a letter to Mr. MacKenzie, which you will find enclosed, and allow me to remain

Dear sir,

With the greatest respect,

Your very obedient and humble servant,

GEORGE KEITH.



# THE FLOOD.

A TALE OF

THE BEAVER INDIANS OF MACKENZIE'S RIVER.

In former times, when people were very numerous upon the earth, it happened that the sun ceased to give heat or light. An unremitting fall of snow threatened to annihilate every living creature upon the earth; the tops of the loftiest trees were already almost buried in snow, and it was with great difficulty fire wood could be obtained.

In order to discover the cause of this dreadful phenomenon, a party of Indians agreed to go upon discoveries, and after having marched many days without observing any difference in the climate, discovered a squirrel's nest. Squirrels in those days were eminently endowed with sense and reason, besides the gift of speech. Here the adventurers pathetically stated their sufferings arising from the sun having been stolen from them, and asked his advice. The squirrel bids them repose until he should dream. This dream lasted some days, and on awaking he told them that a she bear held the sun from them.

Our adventurers upon this information determined to go in quest of the bear and engaged this sagacious squirrel to accompany them. After great fatigue, they arrived in a beautiful

country which the bear with her two cubs inhabited. They soon discovered her wash or couch with the two cubs: the mother was out upon an excursion on the other side of the lake nigh to her retreat. Our adventurers' attention was soon attracted by a long line of *babishe* (1) suspended from the cloud and tied to a piece of wood which lay upon the top of the bear's covering and dwelling place. Upon this line, at certain distances, there were a number of bags neatly laced with *babishe* and which seemed to contain something mysterious.

Our adventurers did not fail to remark this line, and the prudent squirrel averred that no time should be lost, as the mother bear might arrive soon, that an explanation should be extorted, by threats from the cubs concerning the line and the number of bags. Accordingly all hands assuming a savage look entered the couch with bended bows and quivers full of arrows and threatened the cubs with instant death if they did not reveal their mother's secrets. The terrified cubs promised to comply. "The first bag upon that line, what does it contain? Snow," replied the large cub. "The second? Rain. The third? Thunder. The fourth? The Stars. The fifth?" At this question the cub refused to comply, but the adventurers, presenting their daggers and arrows to his breast intimidated him, and he very reluctantly replied that the fifth bag contained the sun.

This put a stop to further enquiries. The active squirrel commanded to his assistance, a pike, first, a *loche* and a mouse. "Come," says the squirrel to the pike and *loche*, "be quick; go and descend the bag containing the sun, and you, my little mouse, go upon the other side of the lake and nibble the bear's paddle half through, so that it may break when she forces it in paddling; you are little and she will not perceive you."

(1) Cords made of leather and which the Indians called *Assayapish*, which the French converted into *Babiche*.

Off they go upon their errands. The *loche* was very slow in her movements, but the pike soon ascended and untied the bag, and was upon his return when he met the *loche* whom he thus accosts: "Be you gone you tardy creature!" "Nay, but give me the bag," retorted the *loche* "and 'ill mend my pace; you will see how I will twist my tail." The pike, not to lose time by further resistance, delivered the bag, but finding that the *loche* could not make way for him, snatched the bag from the latter and soon descended.

The mouse, after executing her task returned at the same time, and the pike was about cutting the bag with his teeth when the bear made her appearance on the other side of the lake. and seeing strangers at her home, quickly shoved her canoe into the water and was crossing with all speed when, to her surprise, her paddle broke. The pike by this time had made a small hole in the bag, and to the unspeakable joy of our adventurers, out flies the Sun, the appearance of which entirely disconcerted the bear. She made the earth tremble with her howlings, but finding that she could not make way without her paddle, she trust herself into the water and made the best speed she could by means of her paws. After all her roaring and exertions she reflected that revenge was now out of her power, as the adventurers had fled, and her power with the sun was now expiring; but in order not to be deprived of the sun's influence. while yet she had some power over him, she in her turn was prudent enough, before it was too late, to command the Sun to show himself to all the Earth, that every one might enjoy his powerful influence.

Let us now return to our exulting adventurers, who soon after found themselves plunged into the other extreme. They had not proceeded many days upon their return when they were threatened with a deluge arising from the impression that the heat of the sun made upon the snow. The waters increasing

more and more, our adventurers redoubled their pace in order to get to the summit of a very high rocky mountain. Unfortunately only two of them, a man and his wife, reached the top of the mountain, all the rest were drowned in the waters. Upon the summit of this mountain were gathered two of every living creature (male and female) that liveth upon the Earth; many of the drowned people transformed themselves into fowls of the air and had the sagacity to retire to this place.

The waters continuing a long time, reduced those creatures to great extremities for want of food. It was at length proposed by the *canard de France*, the *petit plongeur* and the buzzard to dive into the waters in order to try to find ground. Accordingly the *canard de France* showed the example, but soon made his appearance upon the surface of the waters, and only served as a laughing stock to his companions. The *plongeur* proceeded next, but found nothing. The buzzard dived next, and remained under water until his strength was almost exhausted, and was some time above the water before he could impart his adventure, which was however unsuccessful.

After remaining some days inactive, they again dived, and the buzzard alone, after appearing upon the surface seemingly in a lifeless state, had his bill full of earth, which showed that the waters were decreasing. They continued to dive with unremitting diligence for sometime afterwards, throwing out now and then some bitter sarcasm against the least successful, in which dispute, the *plongeur* did not fail to remind the *canard de France* of his bad jealous head. In short the waters dried upon the earth, but as yet the situation was deplorable, as they could scarcely find even roots for their subsistence.

During this interval, *l'épervier*, *l'émerillon*, the *canard de France* agreed to change the colour of their feathers, (at that time, all

the species were white) which they effected, but by what means is not known. Immediately after this event, the *corbeau* or raven made his appearance. "Come," says *l'épervier* to the *corbeau*, "look at my feathers, are they not beautiful? would you not wish to have a coat like mine?" "Hold your tongue," rejoined the *corbeau*, "with your crooked bill; is not white handsomer than any other colour?" The others argued with the *corbeau* to consent, but he remained inflexible, which so exasperated *l'épervier* and the others that they determined to revenge this affront, and each taking a burnt coal in his bill they blackened him all over, and those who could swim took refuge in the river, the others escaped by their superior swiftness in flying.

The *corbeau*, in the mean time, enraged at this treatment, and determined not to be singular, espied a flock of *étourneaux* and, without shaking off the black dust from his feathers, threw himself amongst them and bespattered them all over with black, which is the reason of their still retaining this colour.

Some days afterwards the *corbeau*, in order to vex his enemies, paid them another visit; he had brought with him about his neck a collar upon which were lumps of the fat of the moose and reindeer. *L'épervier* and the others accost him and ask for a little fat, adding that he was very hungry. The *corbeau* made no reply and would not even discover to them where he had taken the fat. The confederates were highly incensed at his behaviour, and resolved to rob him, and *l'épervier* was pitched upon for the enterprise. Off the robber goes, and with one grapple, carries off all the fat. The *corbeau* immediately went off in a passion, but thought the adventure fortunate enough, as he was not personally hurt.

This circumstance of the fat roused a desire in some of the feathered species to partake of this good *chère* with the *corbeau*,

and the *chat-huant* or *chouette* undertook to observe the *corbeau* in his flight, and directed *l'épervier* to throw some ashes upon his eyes when he should tell him, for his sight would probably fail him after steadfastly looking after the *corbeau* for a long time. The *chat-huant* called aloud for ashes, which were no sooner applied to his eyes than he saw clearly, and was enabled to trace the *corbeau* to his retreat, which was in a valley beyond a very high mountain. This fortunate discovery was no sooner made than both man and beast, &c., were informed of it and they all agreed, the water fowls excepted, to go in search of the *corbeau's* dwelling, and took their departure the next day.

After incredible sufferings from want of food as well as from the fatigue of the journey, they arrived at his retreat which was a large lodge covered with the branches of the fir tree. The door of the lodge was made of the pounces of the reindeer. The wolf offered his services first to break open the door, but the fox, on account of his cunning and swiftness, was fixed upon to do this office. The latter, running with all his might, the door split in twain, by which means a prodigious number of moose and reindeer were liberated, being formerly shut up in this lodge.

The man with his wife, who by this time had several children, killed a number of these animals, and seeing that they had enough of provisions for a long time, let the rest go unhurt whither they pleased. Here, this man made an agreement with the beasts of the Earth and the fowls of the Air, (for he was afraid some of them would assume their former shape and become enemies to him and his family) to retain every one his present form, engender and cover the earth; and he on his part agreed not to assume any other form and likeness, nor deter them from wandering whither-soever they choose, and both parties agreeing, separated, which separation continues to this day.

## THE MAN IN THE MOON.

A TALE OR

TRADITION OF THE BEAVER INDIANS.

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In the primitive ages of the world, there was a man and his wife who had no children. The former was very singular in his manner of living. Being an excellent hunter, he lived entirely upon the blood of the animals he killed. This circumstance displeased his wife, who secretly determined to play him a trick. Accordingly, one day the husband went out hunting and left orders with his wife to boil some blood in a kettle so as to be ready for supper on his return. When the time of his expected return was drawing nigh, his wife pierced a vein with an awl in her left arm, and drew a copious quantity of blood, which she mixed with a greater quantity of the blood of a moose deer, that he should not discover it, and prepared the whole for her husband's supper.

Upon his return the blood was served up to him on a bark dish, but upon putting a spoonful to his mouth he detected the malice of his wife, and, only saying that the blood did not smell well or good, threw the kettle with the contents about her ears. Night coming on, the man went to bed and told his wife to observe the moon about mid-night. After the first nap, the

woman awaking, was surprised to find that her husband was gone: she arose and made a fire, and lifting up her eyes to the moon, was astonishad to see her husband with his dog and kettle in the body of the moon from whence he has never descended. She bitterly lamented her misfortune during the rest of her days, always attributing them to her malicious invention in preparing her own blood for her husband's supper.



MacKenzie's River Department, 28th Feby 1810.

Roderic MacKenzie, Esq.,

Dear Sir,

Your obliging letter of the 5th June 1809 was duly handed to me last Fall. I am sorry that my researches this year after Indian information have been unsuccessful. I have not been able to pick up any tales or traditions worth notice, however a desire to please you and to convince you, at the same time, that the will was not wanting on my part, I have taken the liberty to send the following observations, &c. As they are more minute than what I have hitherto sent you, I hope they will be acceptable.

The  
Beaver In-  
dian's  
ideas of  
Justice

The Natives of this establishment entertain very just ideas betwixt right and wrong, and decide matters of this nature as coolly and impartially as could be expected from a set of people who are much attached to their most distant relations, and who have no determined principles or principal persons for settling such matters. We have had two instances lately of their conciliating disposition. Two Indians, not of the same family, were, at different times, wounded by their companions upon a hunting excursion; one died soon after of his wounds and the other recovered. The latter accident was soon settled by the aggressor giving his gun to the other, but the former case was debated by a full convention of both parties, and at last, the affair being

proved to be accidental and not wilful murder, the criminal was acquitted on giving up all his property.

They have no idea of a God or Supernatural Being, and they <sup>Religion.</sup> generally attribute particular events, such as death and other casualties, to their enemies, whom they consider likewise as the authors of eclipses and other phenomena, by means of their art in the occult sciences. However, such events as the latter give them little uneasiness.

They entertain some notions of a resurrection, as appears by their death lamentations, in which they recommend the deceased to the Otter and Loon, *huard*, to conduct him over the Great Lake that leads to the other world. They are very little tinctured with superstition, and do not invoke or perform any kind of worship or adulation to any object whatever.

They have considerable confidence in their own abilities in <sup>Their me-  
dical abili-  
ties.</sup> curing diseases by performing these absurd gestures common, in a less or greater degree, to all tribes of Indians, by means of which they pretend to extract hair, toads and small pike fish from the parts of the body affected. They accompany the ceremony with a song, and at intervals suck and pull with their teeth with all their force, so that the part of the body affected and the flesh all around becomes black and blue before they give over. Every one of the male sex occasionally perform this office, and if the patient recover, it is ascribed to the address of the physician. When the patient is not under age or is a woman, those individuals, who value themselves upon their pretended science, extort payment for their pains. Letting blood, even in the proper vein, with an awl, a pointed knife, pointed white iron, &c, is common to many of them.

They are entirely ignorant of any kind of medical herbs or roots, and I believe the country produces very few of either.

The sick person, after having undergone this painful operation dares not eat a piece of meat or any thing else, until the one who acted last previously chewed and put a bit into the patient's mouth; if this practice was omitted, the patient would consider himself lost.

Respect to  
the dead.

When one dies, the corpse is generally, at the expiration of twenty four hours, placed upon a scaffold to prevent the carnivorous animals from devouring it, and this scaffold is loaded with two or three rows of wood, above and below the body. All the deceased property is destroyed or placed along with him, and the most valuable under his head as a pillow. All those present contribute something to put with him, and for two or three years afterwards always lament the deceased, particularly if a male. Whenever they happen to pass nigh the tomb, those nearest kin generally leave something or other, such as a piece of dressed skin, snares, &c., &c.

Their so-  
cial life.

Different families live upon a perfect equality with one another; they seldom enter one another's lodge unless it be to eat and procure a little meat, and upon such occasions if the visitor is not hospitably entertained, he looks upon this treatment as an insult, and he serves the other in the same manner when occasion offers.

When any one kills and arrives from hunting, it is expected the others will visit him immediately in order to get a portion of what he brings; those who do not, are considered as no friends.

They pay no external marks of respect to their leaders, and indeed the latter are little regarded. A boy will often refuse to run an errand for them unless he happens to be a nigh relation. The younger brothers while under age are subject to the elder, and the youngest son always takes care of the father and mother in their old age.

Their principal amusement is dancing, which they perform all in a circle, accompanied with a song. Young men and boys exercise themselves often in leaping and wrestling; the latter is of use to them upon occasions as they sometimes decide their right to a woman in this way. Gaming is little prevalent amongst them. In their peregrinations, they always inform one another of the route they intend to take, and courriers now and then go from one party to another. When two or more Indian work a beaver lodge, the one who draws the beaver out of his lodge or wash gives it to some other one present. They always proportion their stay in one quarter or encampment according to the means of subsistence it affords.

They live in lodges, generally two families to a lodge, one on each side of the fire. The women seldom prepare the lodge in winter, or go for wood unless the husband is absent, and the men perform all the hard labours, so indulgent they are to the women. All partake of the same mess; but a woman in her menses lodges alone, and never stirs from her lodge. When decamping she must walk behind, and drop now and then branches of trees on the road to give notice to any one who might happen to fall upon the same road, in order to prevent strangers from having sore legs, and make them avoid this route. She pretends to be ten days in this state and suffers not her husband, except upon particularly good terms, Her paramours, however, are permitted to approach her sooner. The men are pretty good economists, but the women are always losing something, and the children bear the blame of this.

Better condition of women.

Although sometimes compelled to eat rank and putrid provisions, they are very careful in cutting up an animal, to cut away all obnoxious matter or glands, and, in summer, they often renew their bark dishes. They prefer snow water to any other kind.

Their  
dress.

Their summer dress (men's) consists of a leather shirt with long fringes, before and behind, neatly garnished with coloured moose hair and porcupine quills. Around the waist, they have a belt neatly wrought with porcupine quills; they wear long necklaces with fringes; their leggings and shoes go with the rest. The tender sex, of course, strives to excel in this particular, and are sometimes covered with fringes &c, almost from head to foot. A young or middle aged widow wears long leggins or breeches as a protection, and children begotten in widowhood are generally stifled upon coming to the world, a rather barbarous method of preventing scandal! The winter dresses are made of fur.

I shall cheerfully continue any information in my power, but am afraid of soon becoming an irksome correspondent. With due respect and best wishes for your health and happiness,

I am,

Dear Sir,

Your obedient and humble servant,

GEORGE KEITH.

P. S.—The returns were extremely deficient in this quarter last year. One of your admirers and old servant, William Smith, my interpreter, died this winter. With all his faults, he was an honest and interested servant for the Company.

MacKenzie's River Dept, 21st Jan'y 1811.

Roderic MacKenzie, Esq.,

Dear Sir,

I had the pleasure of receiving your kind and agreeable letter of the 15th May, 1810, last fall. The last letter which I had the satisfaction of addressing to you in the course of last winter will have informed you of my fruitless researches after any thing that might be worthy of transmitting to you for the proposed publication. I am sorry to say I have been equally unsuccessful since that time.....

I am not surprised that your brother Mr. Donald (1) got tired of the present lingering and fickle attractions of this country : this is perhaps the case with many more who are detained in it merely, I imagine, from being apprehensive of not bettering their fortunes in another quarter, which is often the case, at least with those who have but small resources and must depend upon their own abilities for their future success. This new enterprise (2) is universally known in the North, but in this corner we know little of the plans or probable issues of the undertaking. With us, at least, all must be mere conjecture at present, and time alone can develop the future.

(1) See note 3, page 55, 1st series, "Reminiscences."

(2) John Jacob Astor's Fur Company.

Your acquaintance, Mr. J. Clarke, is gone down this year and, if reports be correct, he will make one more of the number. Latterly, his conduct in this country was rather reprehensible and, in some instances, to my personal knowledge, very justly so. A little elevation is apt to dazzle and make us sometimes forget the previous footing we were on. This, I am persuaded, was his foible. I am always at the same post, struggling to make as many packs as possible; we were pretty lucky last year all over the department.

Your friend, I dare not presume to add, mine, Mr. Simon Fraser, has taken up his head quarters amongst us this year. His predecessor, Mr. J. G. McTavish, though a clerk, was very justly esteemed in this quarter. He has got Slave Lake Department in charge. Our friend, Mr. de Rocheblave, went out and winters at the Pic, Lake Superior; the rest you know better than I do. There was some talk of Mr. Donald McTavish retiring this year; his administration, as far as I learn, has been very able and impartial; Mr. J. McGillivray will probably succeed him.

Quarrels  
with H. B.  
Co's ser-  
vants.

The Hudson Bay Company, at two Posts in English River Department, last year, made only six beavers! they are still desirous of holding out. A very melancholy catastrophe happened to a Mr. McDonald, clerk to the North-West Company in the Nepigon: he was murdered by a party of the Hudson Bay Company, the affair is probably deciding in Montreal at present. (1). We are all too apt to tamper with the Hudson Bay Company and it generally happens unfortunately that the most

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(1) Mr. McDonell appears to have courted his fate by his provocation of the Hudson Bay Company's servants, who were, at that period, far more peaceably inclined than those of the North West Company. In this case they were undoubtedly acting in self defence.—See Lord Selkirk's Sketch of the Free trade, for details.—Mowat, the Hudson-Bay clerk, was poorly defended and condemned to be marked in the hand with a hot iron, besides imprisonment.

serious disputes between opponents take their origin in mere trifles.

You will doubtless hear from your friend in this quarter, I leave this Department next spring, intending to go out as soon as possible to Fort William, with a view of seeing my brother somewhere or other along the route, or at that place .....

I remain

Dear Sir,

Your very obedient servant

GEORGE KEITH.

(1) Eneas McDonell was shot in a scuffle by a servant of the Hudson Bay Company. The servant was tried in Montreal and found guilty of manslaughter.—*Note by the Hon. R. McKenzie.*



Bear Lake, McKenzie's River Department,  
5th January 1812.

Roderic McKenzie, Esq.

Dear Sir,

I was duly favoured with the receipt, last fall, of your agreeable and obliging letter of the 8th June last, and am extremely sorry that my adverse fortune this year has scarcely afforded me the means to continue my account of this quarter.

I have had some trouble and much more anxiety this year than usual, having been stopped by the ice about seven days march from my destination, (B. Lake,) where I was detained with the people of three canoes from the 11th to the 31st Oct, without stirring from the place where we unluckily wrecked one of the canoes; fortunately no lives nor property were lost. Our friend, Mr. Simon Fraser, is still at the head of affairs in this department.

Starvation. A very melancholy catastrophe happened at the establishment of the Forks last winter. It pains me to say that no less than three men and a child sank under their long and distressing sufferings for want of food. These poor men were Poudrier, Pilon and Wm. Henry, and the child belonged to the first. Poor Mr. Wentzel with his family and some other women and children, after almost incredible privations, were the only survivors. The distressing scenes which he unfortunately witnessed and expe-

Mr. Wentzel.

rienced disgusted him with the Grand River, and he passes the winter this year with Mr. John Stewart at Rain Lake (1). There are scarcely any hares in MacKenzie's River Department now-a-days, and upon this account we have much ado to make a sufficiency of provisions for the winter at the posts when there is no fish.

I paid a visit to Fort Chipewyan last summer in hopes of being indulged with a passport to Lac La Pluie the ensuing spring, but this agreeable expectation faded with the arrival of Mr John McGillivray from Fort William, who succeeds Mr. D. McTavish in the Athabasca. We had poor returns all over the country last year, Mr. John Thompson winters in English River Department.....

Dear Sir,

Your very obedient and obliged servant

GEORGE KEITH.

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(1) See Mr. Wentzel's letters, page 106. 1st series.

MacKenzie's River Dept., Bear Lake. Nov. 8th, 1812.

Roderic MacKenzie Esq.

Dear Sir,

Your much respected and friendly letter of the 22nd May last duly came to hand.....

I had the pleasure of addressing you a few lines last winter, but without being able to transmit to you any communications for your highly interesting undertaking. The novelty of my situation, with little opportunity of gathering information from the Natives, exclusive of other circumstances, prevented me till this day from performing this agreeable task. I have however the satisfaction of transmitting along with the present an "essay" on this part of the country and its inhabitants.

I am aware you will find it very deficient and unsatisfactory, but it is the best my circumscribed information and ability can aim at for the present. Had I time for another trial, I might perhaps enter into more details upon the items of customs and manners, both of which are susceptible of illustration as well as enlargement. As it is, you are at liberty to lop and choose as you please, I have no further view than perhaps to have been fortunate enough to hit upon something hitherto untouched in your former communications from Bear Lake.

I am sorry to hear that a few departments are still in arrears in their contribution to the laudable work you have undertaken.

It is to be presumed that the generality of young men in this country have little ambition of appearing in print; as to myself, I assure you, I am under much anxiety for a correspondence to which I get attached more and more.

The great and serious change of politics in Canada is much against us in this country. We always entertained a hope that this unfortunate American war would cease, and God only knows how and when it may be brought to a conclusion.....

.....

A number of the gentlemen proprietors went down last summer along with the returns from Fort William, and you will naturally imagine that suspense to hear the result is particularly distressing on the present occasion. Mr. Wentzel also was on the route to Montreal to consult the faculty on account of some illness, and I expect that, by this time, he has been able to pay you his respects. The Gentlemen are adopting every precautionary measures in their power to avert, as much as possible, the evils threatened by these ominous and menacing times; I sincerely wish them success.

We have had reports from Montreal last Spring respecting Mr. Astor's first expedition; that the vessel, after landing some people at the Columbia, had been seized with the people on board, who were all inhumanly murdered. I hope the report may prove false, as innocent mercantile people should above all, I think, demand our pity in these distressing times.....

.....

I remain

Dear Sir,

Your obliged and humble servant,

GEORGE KEITH.

McKenzie's River Department,  
Bear Lake, 19th November 1812.

Rod. McKenzie, Esq.

Dear Sir,

The Coun-  
try.

.....  
This Establishment or Post (1) is situated upon the borders and at the west end of Bear Lake. The surface of the country in the environs is level, interspersed, however, with mountainous rocky precipices, and an immense number of lakes of various dimensions. The soil is remarkably barren, of no depth and, in general, a composition of pure sand, crumbly rocks and stones; the best spots afford a mixture of clay with fine sand and moss of a black colour. The country is rather low than elevated, full of marshes and poorly wooded.

The Rocky  
Mountain.

That very extensive ridge of rocks called the Rocky Mountain is almost within sight of this place and lies to the westward, extending nearly from north to south. It forms a number of ridges in some places, but all have a kind of connexion with one another, the intermediate spaces being generally filled up with small lakes, rivers, or plains. The ridges are in general of great height and cut almost perpendicular, furnishing only here and there a very winding and intricate footpath for the Indians to cross over small breaks and small rivers, formed by

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(1) Called later "Fort Franklin."

the torrents of melted snow which descend that mountain in the spring of the year.

I have no doubt that several kinds of ore might be found here, if properly explored; the Indians are in the habit of painting their faces with some kind of ore about the size of very fine sand, (something resembling black lead in colour,) which they pick up from various parts of the mountain. Mineral  
produc-  
tions.

In the neighbourhood of this place, upon the borders of MacKenzie's river, there are a kind of sulphurous springs which emit a continual smoke both in summer and in winter. A little below the surface of the ground about these springs, a kind of strata is discovered resembling coals, which when tried in a blacksmith's fire was found to answer the purpose, but smelt very much of sulphur. There are likewise a few salt springs which produce very fine salt, but, by no comparisons, in such immense quantities as in other parts of the interior, particularly the salt springs of Slave Lake, in the Athabasca Department. Salt  
springs.

From the account of the soil already given, it cannot be expected that the country should be, in general, well wooded. Trees and  
shrubs. The white and red fir of a very puny growth are the most abundant, nay, almost the only production of this part of the country. The small quantity of birch, rough and smooth poplar, is scarcely observed, and I understand that this nakedness gradually becomes more apparent the nearer we approach the sea coast by MacKenzie's River. There is no great variety of bush or shrub wood: the willow with another kind of a shrub of a bushy nature are natives here; the latter attains from two to three feet high at most, and resembles the young hazel. There is another shrub distinguished by the seven barks it possesses, and which does not come taller than the other; it produces a flower in the month of July, something similar in colour and size to the medicinal camomile flower.

The cold and inhospitable climate in the vicinity of this lake is very unfavorable for fruit. In favorable seasons we find an abundance of crow and whortleberries, the latter of various shapes and sizes; they receive the flower in the beginning of July, and come to maturity about the 8th September. The Pashaco (?) is likewise a native of the country and very common, with the *atoca*, juniper berry and the *graine d'ours*: (1) all the former come to maturity before the latter which is quite the reverse in other parts of the country. Dye wood or roots are of no variety, there is a small fine root for dyeing a pale or dirty colour, and another root, something like stick liquorice, with which the Natives make a pretty bright yellow. I have discovered no medical plants, and the Natives make use of none being the growth of the country.

## Insects.

The mosquitoes make their appearance about the 15th June and leave us about the end of August, about which time the *brulots* succeed in swarms: their sting is particularly powerful and venomous in this quarter. The horse fly is common; the field bee and wasp is seldom to be seen.

## Birds.

This is a poor country for birds; the thrush, *grive*, and three or four smaller birds of various hues are our only summer visitors, and a small bird, something similar to the sparrow, is the only winter resident, various species of the hawk and eagle or *nonne* (2) in summer. Among water fowls: swans, bustards, grey and wild geese, a great variety of loons, ducks and a few snipes and sea-pluvers, fresh water gulls and cranes. None of these birds make a long stay here, either coming or returning. Vermin is not to be seen at this post, probably on account of the marshy nature of the soil.

## No vermin.

(1) *Graine d'ours*, Bear berry, also called *sac à commis*, creeping plant which is smoked, and which the clerks put in their *sacs*; the clerks alone had those hags.

(2) Bald eagle.

This country is well stocked with reindeer and moose deer, <sup>Animals</sup> and farther off, the musk buffalo is numerous; to hunt these animals, the Natives make use of bows and arrows, and principally snares: those who can afford guns and ammunition, reap peculiar benefit. The musk buffalo, although very short limbed, is comparatively swift, daring and dangerous. This is a poor beaver country, but there are plenty of martens and musk-rats, with a diversity of foxes, such as red, white, black, silver, crossed foxes; no great number of bears, and those mostly black, with a few brown; few otters and striped squirrels.

This country is interspersed in every direction with an almost <sup>Bear Lake.</sup> incredible number of lakes of every dimension, some very large indeed. Bear Lake surpasses them all in this respect. The extent of this immense body of water has not hitherto been ascertained, either by the Natives or the whites. (1) It communicates with MacKenzie's River by a large river that issues from the west end of the lake and disembogues itself into the former at a little more than a day's march in descending the current.

This river, Bear Lake River, is rapid, but the navigation is <sup>Ice banks.</sup> not dangerous except for some time during the breaking up of the ice in the spring, which, on account of its amazing thickness along the banks of the river, remains in some places suspended over a great part of the channel for a considerable time after the breaking up of the ice. These immense bodies of ice rise generally to the depth of thirty to forty feet, and are formed during the winter by some kind of mineral springs which by alternately thawing and freezing, accumulate in this manner to a prodigious height, supported by very steep banks.

(1) "Bear Lake is the largest body of water in this country, and is so very clear that you can see the bottom in twenty fathoms of water." Journal of A. MacKenzie, Esq., 1805. Ms.



There are a good many small rivers, but of little note; the Coppermine River passes at about two days march from the south-east end of this lake.

Intense  
cold.

The climate is very severe, and it needs no comment when I inform you that the ice took upon the lake this year on the night of the 25th October, which, by old residents, was considered as late, and the next morning I saw three Natives, grown up men, cross over from the other side, safe and sound, making a *traverse* of about four miles. In the beginning of May last, the ice upon the lake measured eight feet at places where there was little snow. The navigation, along a shallow shore, opened only on the 5th July for the Company's canoes; last summer, the ice, after being tossed backwards and forward by the winds and waves, totally disappeared the 1st of August. (1)

I cannot say that the weather varies much in this region; our heavy north-easterly gales do not continue above a day or two, almost, at a time, and we suffer most from strong gales and intense frosts during the month of January and February.

Food and  
health.

This place is reckoned rather unhealthy, both to the whites and Natives; this proceeds, I imagine, from the principal subsistence which consists of a small fish about the size of a herring very similar to that taken upon Lake Superior, at the Grand

(1) In 1805, Mr. Alexander McKenzie, the partner in charge of the Great Bear Lake Department, determined to extend the trade relations of the company to the Lower MacKenzie District and eventually to those of the "Groat river" which had been reported to Sir Alexander MacKenzie as running to the west.

Being desirous to return early so as to be able to reach Fort Chipowyan before the end of August, he left Great Bear Lake Fort,—"Great Bear Lake Castle" as he calls it—on the 17th of June, but found the Bear River so full of floating ice,—some fields being six to seven feet-thick—that he was obliged to delay his departure for several days.

M. McKenzie had to hurry his trip, and returned after having reached Trading River, a few miles from what is now called "Old Fort Good Hope." On his way back;

Portage : it is of an oily substance and becomes rather disgusting, particularly as it is not always prepared and cooked with that delicacy which fish of every kind particularly demand. The Natives are remarkably filthy in dressing their food and indeed in every other respect, hence it is no wonder they are subject to colics, and pains in the stomach and diarrhea. They know nothing of medicinal roots or herbs, so that, except singing or

he left Mr. Charles Grant and a few men to build a fort at Blue Fish River, about sixty miles below the mouth of Bear Lake River.

The following thermometrical report kept at Fort Normand, near the mouth of Great Bear Lake River, was found, with several others, among Mr. R. McKenzie's papers.

" STATE OF THE THERMOMETER

" during the month of January 1810 at Fort Normand, (1) McKenzie's River, north latitude 64 $\frac{1}{2}$  per McKenzie's chart,—being the mean of three daily observations."

1810	Date	Below 0	WIND AND WEATHER			
Jany	1	22	N. W.	Clear		
	2	33	S. W.	"		
	3	32	S. W.	"		
	4	37	S. W.	"	43 at midnight	
	5	35	S. W.	"		
	6	29	S. W.	Cloudy		
	7	33	S. W.	Clear		
	8	36	Calm	"		
	9	23	N.	"		
	10	20	S. E.	"		
	11	21	S. E.	"		
	12	15	S. E.	Cloudy, with light snow		
	13	20	S. E.	"	"	"
	14	25	S.	"	"	"

(1) Fort Norman was near the entrance of Great Bear Lake River into the McKenzie River.

rather humming their sick, biting and pulling with their teeth, and sucking the parts affected, they allow nature to take her course undisturbed by any internal prescription. When nigh the white people's establishments, they always apply for some medicine, which is always given gratis.

The Red  
Knives  
" *Contouane  
jaunes* ".

The Natives of this post consider themselves composed of three distinct tribes and assume the names of Red Knives, Filthy Lake and Grand River Indians, and the " People of the big or long arrows ". The former are few in number, about 15 married men, and claim the term of natives only in consideration of their having frequented this post since its establishment, about the year 1800 ; their name is derived from the country they originally inhabited or resorted to, the Coppermine River, from whence they procured copper to make knives, &c. This

Jany	15	31	S. E.	Clear	
	16	36	Calm	Clear.	40 at midnight
	17	33	S. E.	"	
	18	30	S. E.	"	
	19	35	S. E.	"	
	20	40	Calm	"	
	21	37	N.	"	
	22	37	Calm	"	
	23	33	N. W.	"	
	24	30	N. W.	"	
	25	32	N. W.	"	
	26	29	N. W.	"	and cloudy with snow at intervals
	27	35	Calm	"	
	28	37	S. E.	"	Strong gales
	29	35	S. E.	"	
	30	37	S. E.	"	
	31	37	S. E.	"	

tribe, I imagine, is a branch of the Chipewyans ; the same manners, customs, and language, with little variation, are common to both

As to their increase and decrease, I think the balance goes very little on either side. The principal reasons for this are, I presume, the barbarity, drudgery and toil to which the women are exposed. The latter, in consequence of such inhuman treatment, cannot be expected to be much attached to hymeneal rights and therefore invite illicit amour, which, when discovered, often bring the fair offender to an untimely grave. When any woman, forced away from a husband of a subordinate tribe, happens unfortunately to be with child, the latter is generally brutally cast off or murdered. These women, if they do not escape, live for the most part in abject slavery ; no doubt there are exceptions, but this is their general character from what I know of them.

Polygamy is permitted amongst them, and is intended as a means of satiating their passions, and to serve convenience more than to propagate the species. They have seldom more than six children of both sexes. The male sex appears to be predominant, and I presume that the female sex while in infancy are much neglected, in fact women are considered by them in no other light than as slaves, to serve their brutality and propagate the species, a woman in her menses dares not walk in the same foot path with the rest.

They appear to have little idea of morality, in practice at least. That the weak ought to submit to the strong, seems to be a general maxim with them, particularly with regard to their woman (1) ; Other property is more respected. To obtain an

(1) " They often fight for their women, " says Mr. Alexander MacKenzie in his journal ;—unpublished—" the strongest carries off the woman by the hair of the head.

object upon what they regard as fair principles, they will pick a quarrel about something else, which is generally understood, and the parties for the time consider themselves, in outward appearance at least, as good friends.

## Religion.

The present or rising generation would appear to have some notion of an Almighty Being, but I believe they internally allow him very few of his attributes; no doubt they have improved their ideas in this respect from their communications with the whites. They are in general remarkably superstitious, being able, I am apt to think, to give credit to the grossest absurdities, which are indeed very often imposed upon them by self conceited and talkative people amongst themselves.

## Games.

They have little variety in amusements: their favorite play is an imitation of our dice, performed in a dish with a few eagle or bears claws; at this game they will risk the fruits of their industry, altho' sparingly at each stake. At other times they will feast, dance or jump and sing around a circle.

## Interior economy.

They are in general very industrious and very economical. The country affords flesh and fish in abundance, but they prefer the former, and study chiefly to live upon the fat of the land, being remarkably provident and careful of their provisions; the women, altho' they carry or drag the provisions, are very often upon lean and short allowances. Bears flesh being scarce is consequently considered delicate, and the women dare not touch this, as they are told they would die; other kinds of meat are also forbidden, such as the nose of the moose deer, &c. The men also abstain from some parts or pieces of an animal

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Their way of fighting is by pulling by the hair to bring their opponents to the ground, and there he is held until he gives up all claim to the woman. This gives great amusement to the lookers on, who never interfere."

pretending that if they happened to eat such, they would kill no more game afterwards. Their food is in general cleanly prepared and cooked. They make use of the axe or hatchet, butchers knife, crooked knife and *dagues*, with iron trenches for fishing or working beaver.

Their habitations are circular lodges or tents, covered with dressed animals skins, to screen them from the inclemency of the weather, and the fire is made in the middle. Their dress in make is simple, much similar to that of the MacKenzie or Grand River Indians, (1) consisting in winter of caribou dressed skins, with hair on for their robes as well as for shirts and leggins, and their shoes are generally sewed to their leggins. In summer they dispense with the hair of the skin, and their shirts, in particular, are ornamented with coloured beads, dyed porcupine quills, and small feathers of striking or rare colours. But their women are by no means so ingenious or elegant and neat at this kind of work as the Slave women.

They place their dead upon scaffolds, entombed in wood, with all the property of the deceased. The relations cut, bite and scarify the flesh of the body in a shocking manner, and those most nearly related destroy all their property without reserving the most necessary, in order to make a parade of their sorrow for the dead, which in this country is not always free from ostentation. The most distant relations only sacrifice part of their property. The female sex related to the deceased will, every morning at dawn, and again at sunset, bewail and howl him for more than a year.

They have many leaders, such as fathers of families &c., but very few general ones. To become a general leader requires

Extrava-  
gant  
mourning.  
  
Cruel dis-  
position of  
the Nati-  
ves.

(1) See Wentzel's letters, page 86. First series.

numerous relations and some address and ability, with personal bravery or, which amounts to the same with them, ferocity tinged with an inclination to dominate. They are of a very cruel and domineering disposition over the other tribes here, and in their dealings with them pay no regard to honesty, equity and much less to generosity, provided these winning qualities can be dispensed with without they being exposed to consequent retaliation; they are very little exposed to this, except the affair is brought before the superintendent of this post, who, from the influence he possesses generally over the Natives, is enabled to settle any matters of this kind as equitably as possible, and without any disturbance among the Natives. To give this influence, fair dealings, upright and manly behaviour must be observed in his general conduct with the Natives.

## THE FILTHY LAKE

AND

## GRAND RIVER INDIANS

These Indians, altho' they consider themselves as forming two distinct tribes, may be classed together, because the language, customs and manners are common to both. The origin of their name is doubtless derived from the country they respectively inhabit. They are remarkable for that peaceable and inoffensive disposition which generally characterizes the Natives of the upper part of Mackenzie's River, and are evidently a branch of the same root, altho' their general character differs in some respects, a circumstance naturally resulting from local considerations which widely differ, and consequently produce various habits and manners of living among the Indians.

I shall say nothing of their origin; my ideas would be very incompetent to determine upon a thing of this nature, which, when ably discussed, must rest principally, I imagine, upon conjecture. At all events, the Natives have no notion of the matter without the range of their occasional peregrinations. The exact number of their population has not been ascertained, as very few of them are seen at this or any other establishment; and they appear very shy or evasive when questioned upon this subject. However, their limited territory, exclusive of other con-



siderations, prevents them from being very formidable in this respect.

Dread of  
the Red  
Knives.

Polygamy is countenanced amongst them, yet they very seldom take advantage of this general indulgence, arising perhaps from the difficulty sometimes experienced of supporting a single woman with the offspring resulting therefrom, which I am induced to think amounts in most cases from four to eight children of both sexes. This difficulty does not originate from the scanty means afforded by the country, so much as from the want of exertion, the supineness and improvident disposition on the part of the Natives, who urge several reasons in defence of these unbecoming propensities, and insist principally upon the domineering dispositions of their neighbours and frequent visitors, the Red Knives, as the latter very generally make free booty of any little property collected for the purpose of traffic, in order to procure a few necessaries. If the aggressors are resisted, they will force or carry off their women, and it is natural to conclude that, the first being the least of the two evils, the property is sacrificed with the best grace possible. In consequence of this vexation, those most exposed generally sequester themselves to some unfrequented part of the country, until such time as they think themselves in less danger.

This injurious and inhuman treatment must operate considerably against an increase of population, and proves likewise to be a check upon the industry. Exiled in a way from their country, they often seek refuge in barren recesses, where the want of necessaries, combined with other causes, exposes them to much hardship.

From the unprincipled conduct of their neighbours, I think they have caught a slight tincture of the same propensities, for it is certain that they act upon the same principles in their dealings with the Big or Long Arrowed Indians, at least those who

resort to this place, as they are inferior in number; those irregularities, I must say, are however seldom carried to any length. They are in other respects, particularly amongst themselves, humane and equitable in most of their transactions, except with regard to their differences and pretensions about women.

Individual property is pretty much respected, although pilfering is sometimes practised and only punished by the obloquy attending the discovery of the theft, and by the restoration of the article stolen. <sup>Protection of property.</sup> The civilized traders cannot, however, trust too much to their honesty in advancing their wares upon credit, as they very often retard their after visits in hopes of not being recognised later, or plead inability to discharge the debt, which, one way or the other, is often ultimately abandoned.

Their sick and aged are carefully and humanely attended, and the latter are generally entrusted to the youngest son, or the nearest young relation, and the old people bestow the fruits of their industry solely upon their guardians, notably out of gratitude and with a view to indemnify him, as far as lies in their power, for their conveniences inseparable from so heavy a charge.

They have a most confused idea of religion: they do not comprehend, much less acknowledge any thing of a Supreme Power; and yet in the morning before they get up, an old or middle aged man hums or sings an air, which from the tone and manner, appears to me to be a kind of thanksgiving or of grateful effusions for a pleasant night's rest, whether this is the case or not, it always strikes me very forcible to this effect. No words are attached to this air, which is seldom the case with their other songs, excepting the dancing and war songs. Superstition

has no hold on this tribe, altho' I think it would not be difficult to impose upon their credulity in this respect.

Individual  
pre-emin-  
ence.

A good hunter or any one endowed with superior understanding and conduct, commands respect and often a kind of pre-eminence over those few at least who occasionally live with him. Good hunters are seldom to be met with amongst this tribe, and they are consequently justly admired and more particularly with the female sex. A number of men, merely from the indolent habit contracted in youth, are unable to support their lives except as fishermen, in which quality they excel; they also provide fuel for the women and perform any other drudgery of the kind. Bodily strength is likewise a powerful engine, and in youth it is sometimes misapplied in disputes or rather contests about women.

Marriages  
in tender  
age.

Since I am upon the subject, it may not be improper to observe that a man can scarcely call a woman his own until such time as he has got a couple of children at least, on account of the frequency of elopements. The mother in general disposes of her daughter generally when very young, (1)—from 10 to 12 years of age—and very often for present convenience, without much regard to the future welfare or happiness of either party; hence it is no wonder that the daughter in riper years should take the liberty sometimes of choosing for herself, in which case she

(1) These early marriages were of frequent occurrence in the North-West and were not engaged in by the Natives alone. Canadian *voyageurs* and *engagés* themselves thought nothing of taking, as wives, girls in their most tender age. A M. Michel Curot, a clerk in the X.-Y. Company, stationed on Lake Superior in 1803, mentions one of these marriages in these three short matter of course lines of his diary, which speak volumes, and show the scant respect in which those marriages were held by many. *David a pris une jeune fille de 9 à 10 ans pour femme : je lui ai vendu de la marchandise. Il l'a renvoyée pour en prendre une autre plus grande ; je lui ai aussi vendu de quoi habiller cette seconde.* Both transactions on the same day !

seldom meets opposition from her parents, provided the new son-in-law is more industrious and a better hunter.

The children of two brothers, (first cousins) are permitted to become partners in life; this is the nearest affinity in marriage openly averred amongst them, but it is pretty well known that some fathers do not scruple, although with as much secrecy as possible, to make their daughters subservient to their brutal lust, the brother with his sister, the brother-in-law, openly with his sister-in-law and so on.

Degrees of affinity.

The women are gently treated and have considerable influence over the men; notwithstanding, they do not scruple to dishonour the nuptial bed, which is sometimes punished by a few stripes, and more frequently with a gentle reprimand, or absence on the part of the offended for a few days or weeks, according to circumstances. All the blame rests generally with the woman although the seducer shows himself as seldom as possible or convenient for a few days.

Freedom granted to women.

A considerable portion of their traffic is carried on among themselves, although sometimes at reduced prices from what it might procure at the establishment. The nature of the country which abounds in fish and reindeer and its inland situation, at a distance from the post, and particularly the poorness of the country in furs, beaver especially, leave but small inducements to rouse the natural inactivity of these Indians, who, like most poor tribes, particularly in fish countries, are good economists in every respect excepting in the article of food, of which they are little provident. They live principally upon fish, and are not over delicate in their manner of preparing and dressing it, particularly with their wattap kettles, and very few of the Natives can afford copper or brass kettles of any size suitable for a family.

Trade and interior economy.

Winter ha-  
bitations.

During their residence in one place or station,—which upon some occasions lasts weeks and even months, according to the means of subsistence afforded,—they seldom change the pine or fir branches upon the sitting or sleeping places (synonymous terms with them,) in their tents or huts. Their huts, in winter, are generally of an oblong square form, and covered only with fir branches or moss, with a pretty wide space in the middle of the roof as an outlet for the smoke. The square is only about two and a half to three feet high, with an almost flat roof.

Utensils.

They need few utensils: a hatchet, ice trench, knife, a copper or wattap kettle, when they have one, exclusive of their fishing tackle. Very few, indeed, have all these, but they borrow from and lend one another. Wooden or bark (birch) dishes are the only vessels they use.

They are no warriors; I am much mistaken if they ever went on a premeditated war excursion. They place their dead upon scaffolds, the corpse is wrapped up with the deceased's property, with other contributions if any, after which several layers of wood are placed upon the body to prevent the wild beasts getting at it. The deceased is generally lamented every morning and evening by the women related to him, but the men seldom mix in this public lamentation after the corpse is entombed. They seldom however, if nearly related, pass near the spot after a long absence without going to pay their tribute to his manes, and generally tear some of their property and leave it there, I am led to think that the women are soon forgotten, at least they pay much less attention to them at their exit. In winter, the corpse lies sometimes several days "unscaffolded," according to circumstances, and a favorite child or boy will often remain eight days, but in summer scarcely twenty-four hours.

## THE BIG OR LONG ARROWED INDIANS.

It only remains, my dear sir, to see what we have to relate concerning the third and last tribe, called the Big or Long arrowed Indians, who are in the habit, some at least, of resorting to this place for the purpose of traffic.

This tribe inhabits a country to the north of this place; a <sup>The</sup> country in general pretty regular as to its surface, interspersed <sup>country.</sup> with numerous lakes, some of which are of very considerable extent. The soil is as poor, marshy and barren as the other divisions of this country or neighborhood. There are no mountains of any magnitude in this part of the country, which, from all accounts, appears to be pretty extensive. The few I have heard of are principally formed of detached ridges of rocks very destitute of wood.

The only large animals inhabiting this part of the world are <sup>The Musk</sup> the Musk buffaloe and the reindeer; the former no doubt derives <sup>buffaloe.</sup> its name from the smell and taste of musk attached to its flesh, which during the rutting season renders the flesh of the male most disagreeable and unpalatable. These animals never leave the rocky ridges of the mountains. The reindeer lives on marshy and mossy ground.

The modes of hunting are the same as those of other Indians, <sup>Hunting</sup> around this place, bows and arrows and snares, few of the <sup>season.</sup> Natives having guns and ammunition. The most successful months for the chase are those of April, August and the beginning of September, the former on account of the quantity of snow upon the ground which enables the Natives to fatigue

them by pursuit; the latter being the month in which the horsefly is most prevalent, droves of reindeer are forced to take shelter in the lakes in order to avoid that annoying insect. During the other months of the year, the Natives subsist principally upon fish, particularly trout, some of which weigh sixty pounds each, and a large white fish weighing from eight to thirteen pounds.

Intense  
cold.

The climate is remarkably severe and some years proves fatal to the Natives; the excessive frosts and long winters dry up the waters in those lesser lakes to which the Natives have recourse for subsistence, as being less exposed to the intense cold more generally prevalent on more extensive lakes.

Diseases.

I am of opinion that the diseases to which the Natives are subject originate principally, if not entirely, from the dirty and loathsome manner in which they cook and prepare their food, particularly fish, which almost surpasses imagination, also to the most intemperate meals they make after being sometimes for a long time on short allowances. The general complaints, in consequence are colics, attended with *gripes*, squeamishness of the stomach and diarrhœa. Their knowledge in medicine does not extend beyond that of the other Indians around this post, and their mode of treating the sick much the same: pulling, sucking, biting the parts of the body affected, pretending to do miracles, such as extracting small fish, frogs, hair, &c (1).....

The  
Natives;  
their im-  
providence

This tribe is represented as formidable in numbers and they consider themselves composed of several distinct tribes, from this circumstance probably, that they generally resort by groups to different parts of the country to procure a living. Very few

(1) The same imposition is practiced among the Abenakis of St Francis, Canada.  
Note, by Hon. R. MacKenzie.

of them resort to this establishment, perhaps not more than twenty men, and from this sample at least, I would entertain little hopes of an increase. From the richness of their country in fish and flesh, they might, with a very little attention and industry, command a plentiful supply of food all the year round, instead of which, owing to their improvidence and indolent disposition, they are doomed to starve at least during the four severe winter months every year. I am told, however, that those farther off live better, although I have some grounds to doubt the fact.

They have but a faint idea of morality, which appears but too glaringly in the little concern with which they view the sufferings of their relations, for they seldom assist one another unless it can be done with the greatest ease and convenience. In matters of traffic with us, they are great cheats, being much fonder of acquiring things in this way than of procuring them at the sweat of their brows. The few who, from their vicinity, come easily to the establishment do all in their power by false reports, &c. to hinder their relatives at a distance from reaping the same advantage, and this, with a view of monopolizing the whole trade, in which they have hitherto too well succeeded to the great disadvantage of the latter in many respects.

They have a most abominable and inhuman custom of exposing or making away with young children, particularly young girls. A few moments after their birth, the barbarous mother will tell you very composedly that she finds it too hard to support so many children, and yet this same woman, if she happens to have any near akin buried, will, every time she passes in the neighbourhood, go alone and visit the place, lament, howl, tear her hair and scarify her body in a dreadful manner,



and a few minutes after, will laugh and play as before. They often pillage one-another's women, and in many other respects the stronger party does not mind the means provided the object can be obtained.

Religion. During a residence here of almost two years, I have not been able to discover any seeds of religion amongst them and they appear very little tinctured with superstition, it makes, at least, little impression on them.

Occupation. They have few amusements, and, upon the whole, appear to be of a very morose disposition. Their principal occupation is fishing, at which they excel quite as much as they are defective in the chase. They are not very industrious but are good economists in every thing excepting the most precious and often scarce article of food, which they cook quite as dirtily as the other Indians around this place.

Their cooking utensils. Their boilers (their little exertion cannot procure them brass kettles,) are made of wattap, interlaced with willow so closely and neatly that the least sediment, with the swelling of the wood, makes it very tight. Into this vessel, they put the quantity of water required, after which they heat this water almost to a boiling state with stones heated in the fire amongst ashes. The fish, scales and all, is cut up and put into the kettle, and immediately after another lot of hot stones is placed above the fish, and the kettle covered with pieces of wood or bark, and remains so until the stones are cooled, by which time the fish is cooked. The fish is then emptied into a wood or bark dish and often upon worn out fir branches, and then all hands fall to work, scumming now and then the top of the kettle so as to lose nothing of the dirty and oily substance remaining of the soup. When fish is plentiful, it is generally roasted on the ashes before

the fire. Another favorite method of cooking fish is to take a frozen fish and heat it hastily upon the coals until the flesh next to the bones begins to thaw, by which time the fish is esteemed well cooked ; they eat more at a time when so cooked than any other way.

The same poverty, nastiness and sloth distinguish their habi-<sup>Their huts.</sup>tations, which are generally of an oblong square form, entirely built of pieces of wood piled one upon the other until the square is about two or atmost three feet high ; the wood is placed perpendicularly at the gable ends and a little higher than the sides of the hut. All this is enterlaced or covered with the branches and tops of the fir tree, leaving a pretty large space in the middle, the length of the roof, for the smoke, an almost unnecessary precaution, as the smoke would easily find its way anywhere through the many chinks of this miserable and frail building. A hole is left at each end to creep out, and they shut up one and sometimes both in bad weather. The hut being in general no more than eight feet in breadth, with the fire in the middle, it is hard to conceive what misery and inconvenience the inhabitants will suffer. Sometimes a couple of men and women with three or four children will heap themselves up in a diminutive hut of this description.

Their covering or dress of course corresponds with their general <sup>Dress.</sup>poverty and nastiness ; it consists in summer of an old carribou dressed leather shirt, a pair of leggins of the same material, and generally an old thread-bare carribou robe for a blanket. They have a new dress of the same in winter, with this difference that the hair is left upon the skin, and with the addition of a *capuchon* sewed to their shirt. In this slight covering, very often defective in size and besmeared with an oily nastiness

which renders it still less efficient against the cold, they will brave the severest weather upon this extensive and open lake without experiencing the direful effects to which they are exposed. Their dress is seldom susceptible of the least ornament. Those who can afford a double dress in winter will sleep sound upon this open lake without suffering.

Singular  
dealings  
among  
themselves

Those who visit this establishment transfer a few iron works to their relatives farther off, at I do not know how much per cent advance; those vendors are moreover never satisfied, for so long as the article lasts, and every time the vendor meets with his customer after a few months absence, he always advances new pretensions in order to procure any little property, and if this is refused as unjust, he insists upon the restoration of his former property, and one way or the other he often succeeds with his imposition.

Tools.

Their means of supply extend to a comparatively small number, and they fabricate most of their utensils, such as ice trenches, knives, *dagues*, with the *panache* of the reindeer. The hatchet is made of stone pointed at both ends something like a wedge, and attached to a wood handle with a line, all of which, from their frail material and construction, require infinite labour and patience to enable them to perform their several offices. To fell timber with this hatchet they must always chop against the *fil du bois*, and after raising a few splinters, the tree is soon knocked down. It requires much time and infinite address to cut through solid ice six feet thick, with their frail ice trenches without breaking them. The knife and *dague* appear to me the less objectionable of their instruments.

They make use of two pieces of metallic ore, with a kind of spongy substance found upon the bark of the smooth poplar

tree, to make fire. They polish their arrows with beaver teeth, and likewise by rubbing them between two stones. The knife, bow and arrows are the only arms they possess, and the Esquimaux tribes are the only enemy of whom they are suspicious, and it is mere suspicion I imagine.

Like most disunited tribes, they have no leaders of any note No chiefs, or authority amongst them.

Although the environs of Bear Lake are not productive of The trade. that valuable article, beaver, yet the country is well supplied with martens and muskrats, with which, with a little industry and conduct on the part of the Natives, the fur trade carried on here might defray the expenses attending it, and confer inestimable advantages on a set of beings, the most miserable the imagination can conceive. The youthful stripling might be as active and as successful as the man of riper years in the pursuit of these small animals.

It is painful that, notwithstanding every possible encouragement held out to the Natives by the Company hitherto, all our endeavours have proved very unsuccessful, and it remains in the womb of time to determine whether a continuation of such generous policy some time longer, combined with the most powerful motives on the part of the Natives, will arouse their insensibility, and make them feel the good effects to be derived from a communication and traffic with the white people.

About seven years ago, there was a competition between two companies at this place for the trade carried on here with the Natives, but, in consequence of a coalition of interests having taken place, it only lasted one winter. This short contest did not by any means turn out profitable to either party, which indeed it was ill calculated to do, upon the principle it was conducted,

yet it appears to me, without reverting to the issue of that affair, that nothing of this nature could be carried on here to the advantage either of the Natives or traders. It would be the most effectual means of rooting out the few seeds of principles, probity, and industry that the former possess, without in the least bettering their condition as to worldly circumstances.

Bear Lake, 22nd Nov., 1812.

GEO. KEITH.

Rod. MacKenzie, Esq.

Forks MacKenzie's River Department,

15th January, 1814.

Rod. MacKenzie, Esq.

Dear sir;

Your very gratifying and obliging favor of the 7th June, 1813, duly came to hand and it is with infinite satisfaction I observe you enjoy health and tranquility in these disastrous times. Since the news of the declaration of war, I have often felt for our friends' situation in Canada, little expecting that our numerous enemy would be opposed so gloriously and so successfully! Altho' we cannot be said to be at open warfare in this unfortunate part of the country, yet our situation is rather critical and as disagreeable at least as if we were actually opposing the foe in Upper Canada.

Last winter, we were in a manner struck motionless by the dreadful and altogether unexpected massacre at Fort Nelson in this department. Sorry I am to add that the late Mr. Alexander Henry, with four men, some women and children suffered an untimely and barbarous fate, all having been most cruelly murdered by a strong party of Natives of that Post. No one ever entertained the most distant prospect of such an atrocious catastrophe, particularly in that quarter.

Murder of  
Mr. Alex.  
Henry.

These are the execrable beings of whom I transmitted you some years ago such an agreeable picture; still we must consider

that they are savages, and, if acting and entirely influenced by the motive of self existence or preservation, as they have subsequently loudly proclaimed, their most heinous crime is, according to their ideas, at least, in some degree palliated. Distress, and perhaps absolute despair for want of ammunition, exclusive of other grievances, must have brought on our awful misfortune.

The deceased, with all his amiable and good qualities, was rather too much inclined to be morose, inconsiderate and of an unfeeling disposition by turns, and his little success in that quarter, in comparison to former times, was little calculated to soften his natural temper. This is one of the characteristic frailties of human nature, we often think we see blemishes in others, while our own innumerable failings lay concealed from our observation.

I need not point out to you our uncomfortable and almost unsupportable situation after so much distress and so many enormous atrocities which we have suffered within a few years. Indeed, unless some strong measures are applied soon to recover in some degree our former respectability, matters must soon come to an end in this Department.

Mr. Wentzel.

I was favored with Mr. Wentzel's Company at this place last fall. His discourse is more than usually interesting and agreeable, which is saying a good deal. What a fund of news! one thing I like of him, he appears to be very grateful for the generous civilities and noble hospitalities he experienced at Terrebonne and elsewhere. He winters this year at Bear Lake. As I have been talking of news, I must not omit mentioning I had the satisfaction last winter of being favored with one of your sets by our friend, Mr. Simon Fraser, which is the only one I

have seen in the country. Only two sets (private property) have come in this year.

I had the pleasure of sending you a string of remarks and observations from Bear Lake last winter, I wish I could always muster something, were it merely as a pastime, for I do not suppose you can attach very great importance to my dull effusions. I am tempted to mention here a circumstance regarding the Natives here that has hitherto escaped all my enquiries.

When the men are in violent pain and fearful of dying, they generally must have a confessor or one of their *jongleurs* to whom (as the only means of recovery held out to the patient by the latter,) they publicly unbosom themselves without reserve and declare all their evil doings. Previous to confession, the mystical cord, ornamented with loon necks, stripes of mink and other skins, claws of the eagle and a variety of rare and elegant bird feathers, must be attached across the lodge, a little elevated from the ground; over this, the penitent occasionally throws himself upon his belly and the juggler embraces this opportunity of singing, sucking, &c, and performing his mystical gestures and incantations, and singing a gentle reprimand at each avowed offence against moral rectitude (1).....

They are remarkably humble and submissive during this ceremony and ordeal. Excuse and pardon all this frivolity and believe me,

Dear sir,

With unfeigned wishes for your

happiness and prosperity,

Your obedient and humble servant,

GEORGE KEITH.

(1) Unfit for publication.



MacKenzie's River, 4th Feb. 1815.

Rod. MacKenzie, Esq.

Dear sir,

Your obliging and kind favor of the 4th June now lies before me, and I sincerely regret to find that many of your friends in this country have shown a backwardness in contributing to your publication little creditable to themselves.....

Subterranean Beings.

I can scarcely think that you intend to go to press in Canada; it is certainly a poor place for such a work as yours will be.....

I have some thoughts of sending you an account of a consultation held by a few of the Natives here with those they call subterranean mortal, or in other words, according to their ideas, with the bad spirit, but the account seems to be so much filled with the prophetic and the marvellous, that I would wish to be a spectator of the movements and gestures, &c, requisite to set these lower mortals in motion, before I transmit an account of it. It is pretended that there is only one period in the year (when the snow is almost wholly dissolved in the spring,) when these oracles will deign give responses.

Mr. Fraser's journal.

Your mention of Mr. Fraser's journal being in such a state of forwardness rather surprised me. A year or two ago, I had an indirect hint of his intentions of publishing it, but I hardly

thought it could be moulded in such a manner as to be very interesting to the public. However, this was mere conjecture, for, although my curiosity would probably have been gratified, I did not presume to take the liberty of asking to have a peep at the rough manuscript in his possession.

We have no news here worth mentioning ; the returns these <sup>Trade</sup> years have unfortunately sukk to such a degree, that one has no pleasure in mentioning them. I hope, however, that they have now reached their lowest ebb. All your friends in this quarter are hearty. Mr. James Stuart after crossing to <sup>The</sup> Columbia is again returned to his old quarters, New Caledonia. You must have been grieved to hear of Mr. <sup>Mr.</sup>Wentzel's and his <sup>Wentzel.</sup> people's starvation last year ; they were reduced to short allowances almost all winter, but, by last accounts, I am happy to learn that his situation in every respect is infinitely more agreeable this year. His long services and sufferings, one would think, merit considerations, but prejudice and I do not know what, I am afraid, is much against him.

I hope in your next you will have to congratulate us on a peace having taken place with your unprincipled neighbours ; the conditions, I apprehend, will be a bitter pill to " Brother Jonathan. "

With offer of my humble respects and best wishes to Mrs. MacKenzie,

I am,

Dear sir,

Your very obedient servant,

GEORGE KEITH.

Fort Chipewyan, 25th May 1817.

Rod. MacKenzie, Esq.

Dear sir,

Quarrel-  
with Lord  
Selkirk.

I had the pleasure of writing you both from Lac-La Pluie and Fort William previous to my leaving these places last summer, but I am persuaded my letters have not escaped the rapacious and felonious clutches of the Earl. Little did I dream at that time of such perfidious villany; I hope, however, that our turn will come, and make His Lordship (how this title is sometimes prostituted) bitterly regret his infamous proceedings. This consideration encourages us to support with some temper our heavy pecuniary losses, and we are chiefly and deeply affected at the loss of our accomplished friend the late Mr. Kenneth MacKenzie. Compensation would make some amends for the former, but no worldly consideration can wipe away the criminal injury sustained in the unfortunate loss of the latter.

Surely, His Lordship has much to answer for both in this world and in the other; but if he escapes with impunity in this world, he would probably be satisfied, as it does not appear, if we judge by his actions, he much thinks of the other, or he probably calculates on appeasing Charon with a few packs. On the whole, I believe it is the best way to bear the losses and

vicissitudes of fortune with as good a grace as possible. We are not always, however, in this mood, anxiety must sometimes get the upper hand, and during these moments the mind is far from being at ease.

We shall be very anxious to learn the result of affairs at Fort William and elsewhere in the interior, as well as at Montreal, as this plunderer appears to have thrown away the scabbard after having unsheathed the sword.

I would give you some account of the position of affairs in this, your favorite part of the country, but the disorganised state of some parts of the interior little encourages a detail of this kind, suffice it to say for the present that our unprincipled and inveterate O. P's. cause began to decline last summer, and I shall leave you to judge whether our admirable Leader, supported or seconded as he has been, has not done the business for them. During the preceeding winter, including two packs they collected in coming about English River, their returns were scarcely four packs. In short, I trust the prospects of their cause is at an end.

Mr. Clarke brought in 10 canoes! never did a set of men behave with such imbecility; I am sure they have ten thousand times regretted their engaging against us in His Lordship's mad enterprise. The common *engagés* are, through necessity and ignorance, to be pitied, but I can hardly feel much for their leader.

Our returns have turned out remarkably well in this part of the country, and have been obtained without any additional expence, if we except a large establishment of men on account of the O. P. By last accounts from Mr. Wentzel, I am sorry to state he appears to be in a troubled state of mind. He agreed last fall with the Concern for the term of three years at £200,

per annum, and now he talks loudly of renouncing his agreement and going down to Canada.

Please offer my respectful wishes to Mrs. MacKenzie and family.

With unfeigned respect,

I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient and obliged servant,

GEORGE KEITH.

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MR JOHN JOHNSTON

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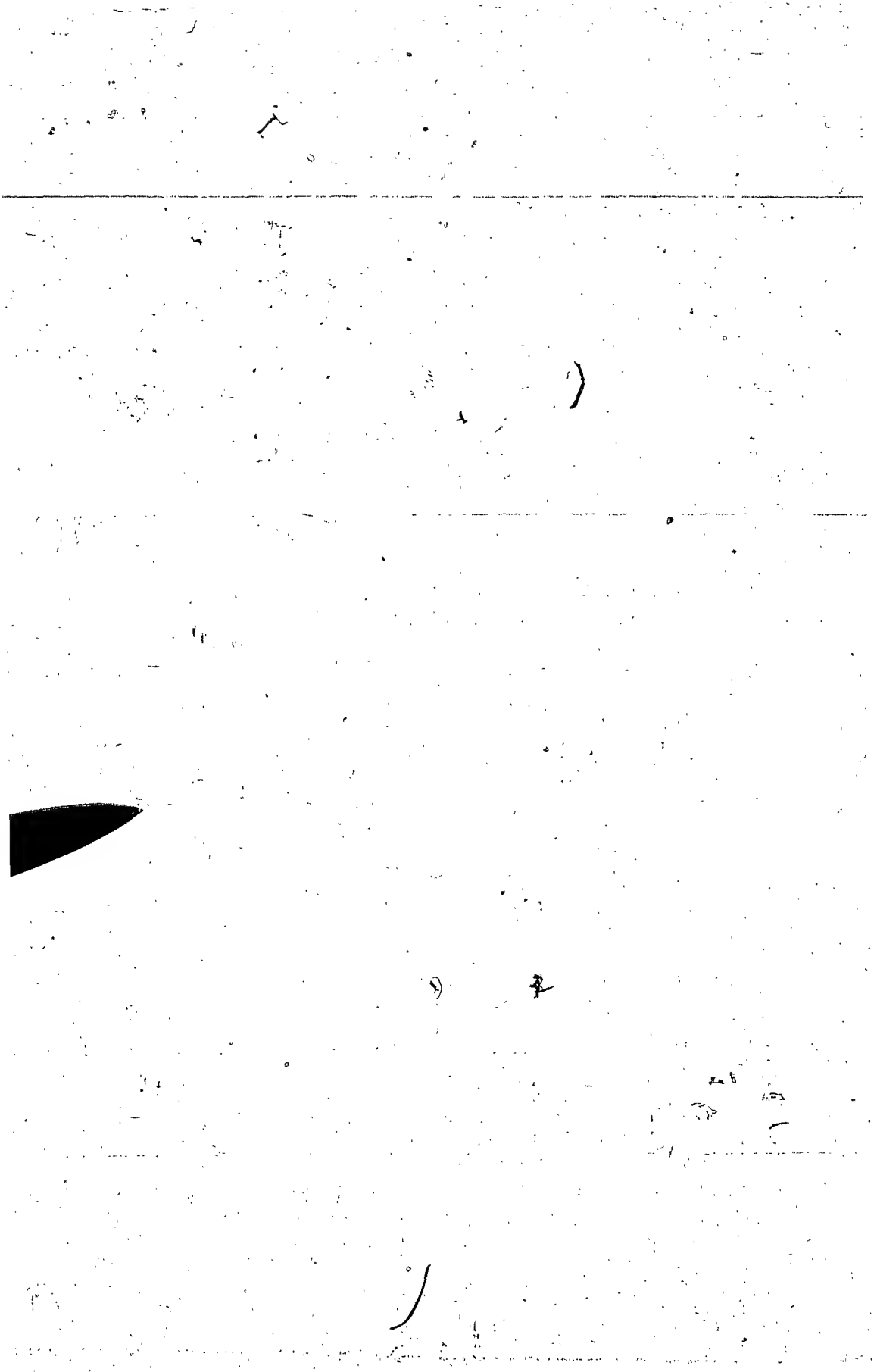
AN ACCOUNT

OF

LAKE SUPERIOR

1792-1807





The name of John Johnston is one not easily to be forgotten in the early history of Sault St Mary and of the adjoining country. His high intellect, his romantic and checkered existence, his successes in trade, his generous hospitality, and, above all, the signal proofs he gave of his devotion to the interests of his country, caused his name to be long held in veneration in the neighbourhood of the Sault.

The descendant of a highly connected Irish family, he was, at the age of twenty, and through some unfortunate and unknown circumstances which blasted his hopes and expectations in the Old World, induced to emigrate to Canada, where high protections and numerous recommendations obtained for him a cordial reception.

Lord Dorchester was himself foremost in his protection and introduced him to the Partners of the North-West Company, who were then already at the head of the society in Montreal. What he saw and heard in the intimacy of those bold, enterprising, hard working and successful men, many, like himself, the sons of good families in Europe, but most of whom had begun life

before the mast, forcibly struck his young imagination, and made him feel that idleness and pleasures could never satisfy even the least of a man's ambition, nor give him back that happiness which he had lost. He determined upon seeking his fortune in the wilds of the North-West, more congenial to his frame of mind, at that time; not, however, under the banners of his powerful Montreal friends, but as an independant trader.

He selected *La Pointe*, on the south shore of Lake Superior, as his first winter home, purchased goods, engaged men and, in the spring of 1792, began in earnest his new life as a fur trader.

Endowed with that high spirit of religion which bore him successfully through life, a melancholic turn of mind and a considerable share of elevated and refined sentiments, the severe and sublime grandeur of our American scenery, whose stern beauties are so lavishly displayed along the shores of Lake Superior, made him cherish his solitude.

One little island in particular, off Potters' Head, fifty miles east of Huron River, had the privilege, as he himself says, "of filling his mind with a pleasing melancholy and a desire for quiet sequestration, where every worldly care and every mean passion should be lulled to rest, and the heart left at full liberty to examine itself, develop each complicated fold, wash out each stain with a repentant tear, and finally become worthy of holding converse with nature, approach the Celestial

Portals and, though at an infinite distance, be permitted a glimpse of its Almighty Sovereign, but our Father and God."

Mr. Johnston named this island "Contemplation Island."

Wabogish, the chief at *La Pointe*, who was a great chief and whose power extended to the Mississippi, had a lovely daughter, the possession of whose hand was the ambition of all the young warriors of the nation. But she was deaf to their entreaties, refused their richest offers, and preferred remaining, she said, with her old father, whom she often accompanied in his excursions around *La Pointe*. In one of these she discovered the large ingot which M. Johnston says so frightened her.

The Indian beauty had often seen the young white trader at her father's lodge, and had, of course, fallen in love with him, while M. Johnston, who by this time had made up his mind to settle his affairs in Ireland and reside permanently in this country, thought to himself that single life was most tedious, that the White Fisher's daughter was charming and he asked Wabogish, the "White Fisher," for her hand.

The shrewd old chief was in no hurry to part with his daughter. He remembered the sad fate of many of the fair ones whose ambition had been to marry the "white traders", and who had been afterwards abandoned by them when they left the country, and obliged to

become the slaves of common *voyageurs*. He told Mr. Johnston to go back first to his native land, settle his affairs, and on his return, if he still loved his daughter, he would consent to her marriage. M. Johnston, who was sincere in his love, left for Ireland, sold his properties, hastened back to La Pointe and claimed his prize, which he obtained.

The good old chief died a few month's after the marriage, and Mr. Johnston settled definitively at *Sault Ste Marie* where he formed a very considerable establishment with extensive plantations of corn and vegetables, a beautiful garden, a comfortable house, a good library, and carried on an important trade.

Mr. Johnston was leading a quiet and happy life at the *Sault Ste Marie*, dividing his time between his business affairs and the education of his children, when war was declared by the United States against Great Britain, in 1812. One of the first acts of General Brock on receiving the news of the declaration of war, was to order the commander at St Joseph to take immediate possession of Michilimackinac which was at the time miserably defended, the American commander being yet unaware that a state of war existed. The feat was accomplished *sans coup férir* by Captain Roberts with a few regulars and about two hundred *voyageurs*, furnished by the Indian traders in the neighborhood—among whom Mr. Johnston—under the command of

Mr. Toussaint Pothier,—“ *le Beau Pothier*, ”—who afterwards became a member of the Legislative Council of Lower Canada.

Two years afterwards, in August, 1814, the Americans having determined upon regaining possession of Michilimakinac, a considerable expedition was fitted out for the purpose, and Colonel McDowall, who was then in command of the British troops, relying upon Mr. Johnston's influence on the Indians, applied to him for aid. Mr. Johnston called out about one hundred of his own *voyageurs* and *engagés*, armed and fitted them at his own cost, and sent them off in *bateaux* to the relief of the Fort.

The Americans having in the mean time heard of this, sent out two gun boats to intercept the relieving party, but having missed them, they pushed on to the Sault where they found no one to oppose them. Infuriated at their ill success, they plundered the North-West Company's stores, and set fire to Mr. Johnston's house, stables and other property, which were all burnt to the ground. Mrs. Johnston witnessed the destruction of her home from the woods where she had fled for safety with her children.

The gun boats, after having wreaked an easy vengeance, hastened back to Michilimakinac. The crews were at the assault, which failed, the fort having been relieved in the mean time.

After the war, Mr. Johnston resumed business, but the losses he had sustained had considerably reduced his fortune, and it was only several years afterwards that he received compensation from the British Government for his losses.

A few years afterwards, Mr. Johnston once more visited his native land, accompanied, this time, by his wife and his eldest daughter, a young lady of surpassing beauty. Every inducement was offered to them to remain in the "old country," the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland having even offered to adopt their daughter. They preferred, however, returning to the shores of Lake Superior, where Miss Johnston was married to Mr. Henry Schoolcraft, the United States Indian agent at *Sault Ste Marie* and the distinguished author of the "History of the Indian Tribes of the United States."

Mr. Johnston died at the *Sault*, in 1828. (1)

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(1) See Mr. Kingsford's interesting article on Mr. Johnston in the "Dominion Monthly" of July, 1881.

Montreal, 21st September 1809.

Dear sir,

Herewith you have the account of my voyage from St. Mary's  
o *Fond du Lac* (1) and the superficial observations I have made  
on the lakes Huron and Superior and the adjoining country. I  
had proposed to add the little that has come to my knowledge  
of Indian life and manners, my ideas with respect to their mi-  
gration from the Old Continent, and to have concluded with a  
sketch of the fur trade, but feeling myself at present inadequate  
to the task, I leave it to hands better able to do justice to the  
subject.

What I here submit to your inspection will require your  
friendly indulgence and correction. I leave it entirely at your  
disposal, and beg leave to remain with sincere regard,

Dear Sir,

Your very humble servant,

JOHN JOHNSTON.

ROD. MACKENZIE, Esq.

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(1) In 1792.





## AN ACCOUNT

OF

# LAKE SUPERIOR

The Fall of St. Mary's is the only apparent outlet for the redundant waters of Lake Superior, the vast extent of which—being more than twelve hundred miles in circumference,—makes it very problematical how it can answer the purpose, especially when it is considered that innumerable streams and many rivers, nearly as large as the Fall, pour their waters in that great inland sea; but I may have something further to say on this subject when I come to speak more particularly of the lake and the quality of its waters.

The fall is about half a mile of length and a mile in breadth, including the islands on each side. On the farthest stream, on the north side, the North-West Company have a fine saw mill, and also several houses and stores for the reception of their goods from Montreal, their vessels coming to anchor within three hundred yards of the *quat*.

The goods are carried over the portage, which is half a mile in length, (1) and deposited in a store from whence they are

(1) Mr. Douglas Brymner, the Canadian Archivist, truly says, in his report of 1886 that the history of the construction of a canal on the Canadian side of Sault Ste Marie is most obscure. It is, indeed, very singular that Mr. Johnston, who lived at the Sault, should make no mention of its existence; his statement, on the contrary, would lead

conveyed in *batcaux* to the vessel which transports them to *Camanitisquia*, their chief settlement on the north-western extremity of the lake.—The meaning of the word in the Chipeway language is “River of difficult entrance.”—It is about one hundred leagues from St. Mary’s.

to the belief that, in 1809, the year during which his “account” was written, no canal existed, and that the goods and furs of the North-West Company were still “carried” over the portage.

As early as 1796, the partners of the North-West Company, with the aid of the members of the firm of Forsyth, Richardson and Company, who had been, for several years previous, carrying on an extensive fur trade on the north shore of Lake Superior, determined to construct a road forty feet wide on the north side of the Sault, to take the place of the old portage, and an exploration of the route was made during the spring of 1797.

In the mean time, however, the agreement which had been entered into by the Canadian traders after the death of Mr. Ross, in 1787, having expired, several members of the North-West Company entered into partnership with Messrs Forsyth, Richardson and Company, and went into competition against their old associates, who then determined to prosecute the work alone.

Without losing a moment, the Old Company asked for a concession of the land required, and, with that rapidity of decision and execution which at all times distinguished that company, they set immediately to work, without even waiting for the result of their application, and not only completed the road but also built a canal, which was, certainly, open to navigation by the summer of 1800. Harison, at the date of the 30th of May, 1800, says in his journal: “Here,”—at Sault Ste Marie—“the North-West Company have built locks in order to take up loaded canoes, that they may not be under the necessity of carrying them by land to the head of the rapid, for the current is too strong to be stemmed by any craft.”

The New North-West, or X Y Company, claimed the right of using the canal in common with the Old North-West Company, under the pretence that it was built upon public property. The latter, on the other hand, contended that they had an exclusive right to the improvements created by their own industry, and stated that so long as tolls were not paid by outsiders, sufficient to cover the cost of their improvements, they would oppose their making use of them. They did so effectually until the amalgamation of the two companies, in 1821, which put an end to the dispute.

The active and enterprising spirit displayed by the North-West Company in this as well as in many other instances, leads to the belief that, had it not been for their quarrels with Lord Selkirk, and had they not amalgamated with the Hudson Bay Company in 1821, the opening up of a line of communication between Canada and the North-West Territories, and, consequently, the settlement of that country from Canada, would have been advanced by a quarter of a century. The interests of the North West Company were intimately bound with those of Canada, while the interests of the Hudson Bay Company were in an entirely opposite direction. A few years only after the coalition, the trade of the North-West with Canada was completely destroyed.

The company have been obliged to establish themselves there from an idea that their original settlement at Grand Portage was within the American boundaries, though it is sixty leagues to the north of the extreme end of the lake. The express words of the treaty are, that the middle of the navigable rivers and lakes should be considered the line of separation, a line drawn with a degree of absurdity and ignorance hardly to be conceived, and which has wantonly given away several thousand leagues of the richest fur country to which the Americans had no more right than they had to the Province of Bengal.

But, to return from a painful digression; the rapid — for properly speaking it is not a fall — runs over a bed of red <sup>White</sup> ~~free~~ fish fishery. stone, interspersed with large white stones and rocks of coarse granite.

The eddies formed around the rocks are the best places for taking the white fish, this is done with scoop-nets, fixed to a pole and bent so that the circle to which the net is attached can be brought to lie flat on the bottom. The man in the bow of the canoe lets the net drop right over the fish, and the steersman gently lets the canoe descend, then the fisher gives his net a sudden turn, and hauls it up close to the canoe, and proceeds to push up against the stream to the same pool, if he sees any have escaped, or else pushes off to another.

As some of these pools are more frequented than others by the fish, ten or twelve canoes are sometimes seen in a line waiting their turn for a cast, and so great is the quantity of fish that they all return with a plentiful cargo. The greatest haul I have known was fifteen, which requires great strength and address to get aboard without losing any, or over turning the canoe.

The fish are from five to ten pounds weight, and, when in season,—which is from May to November—are the richest and best flavoured ever found in fresh water. They cure as well as cod, and are the chief support of both the Indians and white people here.

The situation of the village is pleasing and romantic; the ground rises gently from the edge of the river, the houses, if they merit that name, are scattered irregularly over the ridge, to within four hundred yards of the fall. The turf is covered with sweet grass and white clover, which, from its constant verdure, gives a lively air to the scene.

The soil. The soil immediately about the village is light mould and sand, from twelve to eighteen inches deep, over a bed of clay, cold and sterile until exposed to the weather for a season, when it crumbles into fine mould, and helps to improve the surface. Those who go to the trouble and expense of inclosing and draining have as fine oats and vegetables as any in the world. I have seen several ears or heads of wheat and oats which had fallen into the garden by accident come to perfect maturity.

At two miles below the falls the river divides into two branches; that to the north is the navigable or ship channel, between which and the south, or canoe channel, there is a line of island covered with maple, birch, oak, ash and pine, bordered with extensive meadows of natural grass.

From the little rapid which is the head of separation between the ship and canoe channels, the latter takes its course southwest for five leagues to the rapid called Nibith, the whole extent of which, on the river edge and back, is covered with maple and is one continued meadow of the richest soil, I ever saw. It is intersected with little runs of water at every three or four miles, until you come to the last and largest, called Methcouthsagné River, where a band of Indians have their gardens, and

where, about half a mile up the creek, there is a capital fall for a mill.

The distance from St. Mary's to Fort St. Joseph is thirteen computed leagues, and from thence to Michilimakinac, fifteen...

The river above the fall has nothing remarkable for two leagues, until you arrive at Pine Point, — *Pointe-aux-Pins*, <sup>*Pointe aux pins.*</sup> which is a sand bank of several miles, and covered with red and white pine, the best of which have been cut down and used by the North-West Company for building their vessels (1). The river here takes a northerly direction for three leagues, where it terminates, to the right, in a high and round mountain of solid rock, called by the Indians the "Metal Toad," and to the left, by an equally high mountain covered to the summit with trees, and called *Pays Iroquois*, from a band of that nation having been cut off there by the Chipeways, on whom they had come to make <sup>*Pays Iroquois.*</sup> war.

At the foot of Iroquois Mountain and on the beach, was found a large piece of silver ore, which was given to Captain Norlesk <sup>*Silver ore.*</sup> (2), who then commanded at Mackinac. It was sent to London and found to contain 75 % of pure silver. However, no research

(1) The "Athabaska" was one of the first—if not the first—schooners built at *Pointe-aux-Pins* by the North-West Company. It was soon found too small for their ever increasing trade, and, in 1793, a larger boat, called "The Otter," was built at *Pointe-aux-Pins* by a Mr. Nelson, and was destined to sail between *Sault Ste Marie* and *Grand Portage*.

The *Athabaska* was later floated down the falls to do service with the "Beaver", another of the company's boats between the Sault, Michilimakinac and Detroit, &c., for the transportation of such goods and furs as were sent by the lakes, but the greater part of the trade was carried on through French River and the Ottawa River to Montreal.

(2) Alexander Henry calls him Norburg, a Russian gentleman, and says he held a commission in the 60th Regiment.

has ever been made for the mine, which perhaps is not far distant.

Lake Superior washes the base of these, its strong and natural barriers, from the summit of which the view is grand, extensive, reminding us at once of Calpe and Ceuta, and only wanting a poet to erect them into "Pillars" and make them the boundary of some hero's travels. The distance between the capes may be a league and a half. You have a view of the north side of the lake for ten or twelve leagues from the entrance, the mountains exhibiting the greatest variety of form until the view terminates in that called the "Paps" (1), which towers sublime in height and beauty over its subject hills.

*Ile Parisien.*

About three leagues from the entrance of the lake, and a little inclining to the north side, is *Ile Parisien*; remarkable for a marsh near its south-western extremity, the water of which is so strongly impregnated with iron that it cannot be used for common purposes.

*Cape Iroquois.*

Cape *Iroquois* is of difficult access to canoes on account of a rocky shoal which surrounds it; but there is a little island off the westernmost point, where there is a pretty good landing. The ridge of mountains of which the cape is the north-eastern termination retires gradually from the lake, leaving a fine sandy beach. The soil, or rather the sand, rises abruptly from eight to ten feet and is covered with pine and cypress for half a league, until it joins the rich soil, where the sombre forests are changed for the gayer maple, beech, birch, poplar, &c.

The mountain here suddenly approaches the lake, and in the space of three leagues throws out four or five projecting points of freestone, studded around with common rocks, but chiefly,

(1) *Le Pape*, most probably.

of course, granite, the stratum of freestone extending itself indefinitely under water.

From these points you cross a large bay to River Jackwami-<sup>Dark tinge of the wa-</sup>nan, the approach of which is very difficult, the channel often shifting its place, and the water so black that you cannot see the bottom in a circumference of three or four miles, though seldom more than eighteen inches or two feet deep.

It is very remarkable that all the rivers on the south side of the lake have their waters tinged as black as if their source was from turf bogs. The leaves and other vegetable matter which fall into them are not a sufficient cause for this, but I fancy the soil in land has actually acquired the nature of peat from the accumulation of vegetable matter in the course of ages. There are many advantages which should induce farmers to settle here; the soil is excellent, very little under wood and large improvable meadows. There is a fall about three leagues up the river where in spring you may take any quantity of sturgeons.

From hence to the extremity of White Fish Point, the distance <sup>White Fish Point.</sup> is five leagues; the land, low and sandy, has been apparently recovered from the lake, as the sand banks are in regular ridges, with hollow spaces between as if each in its turn had been a beach.

The point runs out in a northerly direction and has the mountain called "The Paps," nearly opposite, which is the last part of the northern shore to be seen from the south side, a distance of fifteen leagues. The point takes its name from the quantity of white fish that surround it every spring and autumn.

Two leagues from White Fish Point, in a south-westerly direction, is Vermillion Point, so called from a quantity of cinna-  
bar being found near the surface of the earth.



*Grand Marais.*

From the White Fish Point to *Grand Marais*, or the Great Marsh, the distance is fifteen leagues, the course nearly south by west. The beach all the way is nothing but sand and gravel, and the bank, which is from twenty to fifty feet high, is a continual line of firs of different kinds.

About thirty years ago, the *Grand Marais* was really what its name indicates; a little river ran through it which scarcely admitted of canoes, but it is now a beautiful basin of water upwards of a league around, very deep in the middle, but rendered useless by a gravel bank which bars the entrance; tho' it has some times from four to six feet of water, I have often seen in several places the gravel thrown up two or three feet above the water. The entrance is very remarkable, having a high sandy bank to the north-east and an equally high bank of clay to the south-west. It is at least half a league over, and is always deepest at the south-west point.

Above the clay bank there is a fine maple grove, which runs nearly south, but narrows off to the south-west, where it is lost in a deep fissure, the sides of which are covered with pine and cedar.

*The Sandy Mountains.*

On climbing up the opposite side, you are struck with wonder on finding yourself on a sandy plain several leagues in extent, the side of which, fronting the lake, is from one hundred to two hundred feet high, and nearly perpendicular. This plain terminates inland in a lake of extremely black water which has no outlet but a little rill that passes through the fissure above mentioned.

While rowing along the front of this precipice you see sand and stones at every instant rolling down, yet the beach never increases in breadth nor height. There are two or three crevices in a distance of two leagues where people could save themselves in case of a sudden storm, but you must inevitably lose your

canoe. This apparently immense line of sandy mountains is, upon inspecting the several crevices made in its front, found to be a strong loam or clay, the surface of which is pulverized by the intense frosts of the winter and the often no less intense heat of the summer.

The Indians have many superstitions with respect to this mountain which, with every other remarkable or dangerous place on the borders of the lake or interior country, has its Genii, to whom they never fail to make a speech, accompanied with a present of tobacco and sometimes their silver ornaments, whenever they pass. <sup>Superstitions.</sup>

The Negouwatchi, or Sandy Mountain, is the scene of many of their fairy tales, some of which are very pretty and attended with a moral, and others equally absurd and childish, but all tending to prove their Tartar or Arabian origin, especially those relating to the creation and deluge (1).

The Sandy Mountain is terminated by a point of red and grey freestones which projects nearly a mile into the lake, and is surrounded with rocks, chiefly under water, these would make the doubling of the point very dangerous to canoes but for the extreme clearness of the water, by which you are enabled to see them in time to avoid a disaster. <sup>The waters of Lake Superior.</sup>

There is not perhaps on the globe a body of water so pure and so light as that of Lake Superior. It appears as if conscious of its innate excellence: the innumerable tainted streams which pour into it are forced to creep merely along the beach without once being able to make an impression on its unstained bosom.

There is no better proof of its lightness than the manner in which it becomes ruffled by the slightest wind. When a gale

(1) See J. H. Kolh, "Kitchi Gami" or Wanderings around Lake Superior.—D. Cameron and Peter Grant.

blows from the opposite shore, it has been known to raise the water several feet some hours before its arrival. This is more particularly noticed at the Fall, where it often rises two or three feet in as many minutes, and this rising is always succeeded by a north-westerly wind.

There is certainly a slow but periodical rising and falling of the lake, in no way affected by external circumstances yet discovered, but it has not had that attention paid to it the phenomenon merits. (1) The old inhabitants say the term is seven years, but of this there is no positive proof.

The Portails or Façades.

The beach from the last mentioned point is much lower than the Sandy Mountain, being seldom more than twenty to thirty feet above the level of the water, but at the *Portails* or *Façades* the coast turns more to the west and begins gradually to rise to at least two hundred feet. The rock is white freestone, perfectly perpendicular and, in a distance of three leagues, has three little bays nearly at equal distance, and as if placed by the hand of Providence to ensure safety on a coast otherwise not to be attempted in hardly any season.

About half a league from where the rocky coast forms an angle with the sand beach, there is a pretty waterfall which breaks from amongst the trees and tumbles in foam down the side of the rock for about sixty feet. The projection then becomes greater, and about twelve to fifteen feet from the base, collecting its scattered force, it pours the contents of its little urn perpendicularly into the lake.

(1) Captain Bayfield, in his "Outline of the Geology of Lake Superior", denies the existence of any periodical risings of the lake beyond those caused by the melting of the snow in the spring of the year, which was more or less considerable according to the severity of the winter. The contrary is only supported, he says, by vague reports of old traders, which cannot be substantiated.

I once passed here in the month of May, immediately after a gale of wind which had continued for four days, with severe frost and snow from the north. The effect on the fall was beautiful. It was frozen up entirely except a little gutter in the middle, not more than a foot wide. The sides resembled pillars variously fluted; the shrubs at the mouth of the rivulet were perfect figures in ice, which appeared like Corinthian capitals. A young pine about thirty feet high which grew in the middle of its bed, and sparkling like a conical pillar of crystal sculptured in fret work, crowned the brilliant perspective.

Not far from the fall is the first of the little bays or recesses, the bottom of which is a reef of smooth rock, intersected with many crevices or fissures, the bottom of some of which I could not find with an oar. It is very shallow for some distance out, and never resorted to except in case of absolute necessity.

From Freestone Bay, the rocks assume a still loftier appearance. The several strata from which exude different mineral waters, tainting the white smooth freestone with innumerable grotesque figures in a variety of drapery, are easily distinguished. This, with the summit of the precipices crowned with lofty maples, every shelf and vein filled with shrubs and evergreens, sometimes in festoons, and at others spreading like hanging gardens, makes a piece of scenery scarcely to be equalled in the world. Pictured  
rocks.

The second recess now opens before you, agreeably relieving the eye by the soft contrast from stern grandeur to rural simplicity.....

.....  
 Shortly after leaving the second recess you perceive a cove, the mouth of which is finely arched and slanting longitudinally towards the Bay. I have never had time nor inclination to explore it, nor have I heard of any who had.

The point you have now to double shoots out with great asperity; the height cannot be less than two hundred feet. On the top are several large stones and some noddy trees which equally threaten destruction. The mould being torn from above them by frosts and storms, they appear as if ready to tumble at the least motion, and, in fact, hardly a spring passes but some of them do come down with the thaw.

The base of this point is curious from the manner it is perforated, which resembles bowls turned down and others set upon their bottom, the interstices giving you the idea of porches and gothic windows, the water rushing in and regorging from them in a manner that by no means invites to close inspection, except when the wind is off the shore, or else during a dead calm.

Miner's  
Bay.

There is nothing remarkable from this point to the third and last bay but the ruins of a once magnificent natural arch, under which canoes used to pass, full sail; it is now a confused heap of freestone slabs, which may be had of any dimensions, the grit being excellent for grindstones.

Mining  
operations,  
1772.

This last recess is called "Miner's Bay." Some efforts have been made here, as well as in several other places on the borders of the lake, about thirty-six years ago, to find copper and silver mines, by one Baxter, who was employed by the then Duke of Richmond and several other noblemen and gentlemen. The enterprise failed by the villany of the person employed, who, by feeding the men on Indian corn and grease, (1) and selling them every necessary at an enormous price, made a considerable sum of money. The only revenge in the power of the workmen was to work little and carelessly. It is even believed here up

(1) These were the rations given to the *Voyageurs* and *engagés* of the North-West Company around Lake Superior. *Folle avoine* was often substituted for Indian corn.

to this day that when they found veins of metal they concealed them. Such has ever been the conduct of the low and ignorant. Had they, on the contrary, done their duty faithfully, it would have been in their power to have brought the scoundrel to justice, and to have recovered from him the price of their time and labour.

After you leave Miner's Bay you double a point nearly similar to the last described, except that there is a little natural arch through which you can pass in a small canoe. Grand Island is now opposite to you; it stretches almost due north into the lake, and is about nine leagues in circumference. The soil is excellent and the timber chiefly beech and maple. Grand Island is the summer residence of a small band of Indians, who cultivate maize, potatoes and pumpkins.

From the last point of the cascades, the rock continues nearly of an equal height for half a league, then recedes in the form of an amphitheatre, surrounding Grand Island Bay, which is completely landlocked, and forms the largest and safest harbour upon the lake. The entrance is from the north-east; the island must be kept close on entering the bay, to avoid a sandy shoal which begins where the cascades terminate, and runs nearly a mile right into the channel, but is easily avoided, as part of it is above water.

The bay is at least four miles in circumference, the land gently rising from the water edge and terminating in a chain of mountains from which the cascades is a projection; and surely if ever Milton's description of "shade above shade a woody theatre" was realized, it is here.

There are two rocky islands in the middle of the western channel which communicate with the main land by a reef, on which there is not more than three or four feet of water, and preclude all entrance of vessels from that quarter.

The south end of Grand Island is low and sandy but covered with herbage; on it and on the adjoining hill, the Indians have their huts. The bay is directly opposite where they go spearing every calm night with *flambeaux*. They take as fine trout and white fish as are found in any part of the lake.

Dead  
River.

The coast from Grand Island to Carp River, which is twelve leagues, is only remarkable for a constant change of rugged freestone points and sandy bays, each of which has its little river to which the Indians give a name, though the greater number will not admit of a loaded canoe, being choked at the entrance with banks of sand thrown up by the lake, and they are seldom navigable more than three or four leagues, even for small canoes.....

About four miles from the river, is the peninsula which projects north-east and is curious from being one half freestone and the other basalt. The Indians find in the fissures of this last a black substance not unlike limestone, which, when pounded, they put in a small bag and boil with any stuff they wish to dye black; the colour, however, is not bright, though lasting; the same quantity will serve many times without any apparent diminution of strength.

About two miles east of the peninsula, there are several high rocks where the Indians say there is copper. I visited them last year and found them very different from any I had hitherto seen, they having in many places the appearance of metal. The neck of land, or rather sand, which joins the peninsula to the land exactly resembles that behind White Fish Point, and has been no doubt gained from the lake in the same manner.

At the union of the neck with the main land there issues a torpid stream, called "Dead River", some miles above the en-

trance of which the Indians cultivate a little maize; but of the soil there is little to be said as it is thinly scattered among the rocks, and would hardly afford a few acres in any one spot.....

It is to be remarked that the metallic rocks of the peninsula are the only ones in the whole circuit of the lake which have neither trees, shrubs or vegetation of any kind growing on them, though many others, not near so high and equally devoid of soil, are almost covered with stunted pines. This, the mineralists may account for as they please, but I found on them what was more acceptable than any vegetable: a quantity of sea gulls-eggs which were as large as those of turkeys and which, when fried in the pan with some pork, made an excellent supper, with a dish of aromatic tea.

About three leagues from the peninsula there is another which, though much smaller, is worthy of notice. It is joined to the land by a narrow strip of sand and freestone; the head, which is not more than a hundred yards in diameter, is one half freestone and covered with trees, the other, on the extreme end, is basalt as smooth as glass, and has, as elsewhere, a great depth of water around it.

When you double the headland, you arrive at a fine sandy bay and a small river of clear water which meanders through a considerable extent of meadow. In the bed of the river, I found a part of one of the earthen pots used by the Indians before they had the use of copper and tin kettles. It is the only specimen of the kind that I ever saw, and a ruder attempt at pottery, I believe, was never seen.

From Potter's Bay to Huron River is twenty computed leagues, in which space the beach is either semi circular islands or bold projecting freestone points, the stone mostly of a brick colour.



Off one of these points the rock runs under water a great way out, and it appears as if a vast number of silver pieces, from the size of a dollar down, were scattered over the bottom. The depth is not more than four to six feet and, when the water is calm, the deception is complete.....

I must not forget that off Potter's head, about four leagues out, in a northerly direction, lies a small island, apparently round and prettily high, which, when looked at from the shore in a calm clear evening fills the mind with a pleasing melancholy and a desire for a quiet sequestration, where every worldly care and every mean passion should be lulled to rest, and the heart left at full liberty to examine itself, develop each complicated fold, wash out each stain with a repentant tear, and finally become worthy of holding converse with nature, approach the Celestial Portals and, though at an infinite distance, be permitted a glimpse of its Almighty Sovereign, but our Father and God.

Contem-  
plation  
Island.

When I made my first voyage in the lake, which is now fifteen years ago, I tarried opposite Contemplation Island, as I called it, for four days, and I recollect having filled ten or twelve pages of my journal with reflections, remarks and some poetical effusions, the result of so much spare-time.....

From Huron River, the course is south-west, along a sandy beach for a league to a bay or rather a gut of the same name, which is not quite a league over at the entrance; the bottom is rocky, with from ten to fifteen feet of water. The gut runs in a direction nearly south and is, I think, more than four leagues in length, the water deep and clear. The bottom of the gut approaches so near the bay of Keeywaynan that you can hear the report of a gun across the ridge of a rocky mountain which

separates them, but it grows broader towards the lake, where it terminates in a flat point partly basalt and partly freestone.

On doubling this point, you enter the Bay of Keeywaynan, <sup>L'Anse,</sup> which is four leagues broad at the entrance, and continues <sup>Keeweenaw</sup> Bay. of nearly the same breadth for three leagues, and then narrows gradually to the end, which is a circular bassin of about a league. The mountains from behind Huron River bend back towards the south as if to make way for the two bays, and then wheeling around to the north form the tongue of land called by the French *L'Anse* and the Indians "Keeywaynan", or "the way made straight by means of a portage."

From the bottom of the bay to the extreme point of the tongue, is at least fifteen leagues, and the general breadth not less than five. About three leagues from the entrance of the bay there is a small peninsula which, when doubled, takes you in a basin of two miles in circumference which can hardly be excelled for beauty and safety. The soil is very fine on the peninsula, and here the Indians have a summer village and cultivate some maize.....

Off the extreme point there is an island, two or three miles from the shore, which the vessels generally approach from Camanistiquia, and near the entrance of the bay there are two small islands around which there is good anchorage, which enables a vessel to hold what she has already made, in case of a north-easterly gale.

The peak of Nipagon, which projects considerably into the lake, and is exactly opposite the Keeywaynan, forms a kind of strait, and is the narrowest part of the main body of the lake, not being more than thirty or forty leagues over. From Grand Island to Michipaquaton, on the north shore, it is at least eighty

leagues broad and about thirty leagues to the south-west of Keeywaynan. From the Porcupine Mountain, of which I shall speak shortly, to the bottom of the Great Black Bay, which approaches the Hudson's Bay territory on the opposite side, the distance cannot be less than one hundred and twenty to one hundred and thirty leagues.

The greatest length of Lake Superior is reckoned from Metal Toad Cape to what the French call *Fond-du-Lac*, which I am certain is not less than one hundred and fifty leagues. When to this vast surface is added the unrivalled purity of its water and its great depth—which was tried by the Captain of the North-West Company's vessel off the *Pique*, in 1793, with six hundred fathoms of cord, but no bottom,—it must be allowed the superiority over all the inland waters yet discovered.

Mirage.

But, to return to the Anse ;.....  
And here again I cannot help digressing to attempt the description of a phenomenon which, though perhaps common, was to me new and beautiful.

One fine evening, in the month of May, 1803, I was doubling a long and rocky point which leads to Huron River, where I intended encamping for the night; the sun was nearly settled and just gilded the skirts of the Keeywaynan Mountains with its horizontal rays, tipping the tops of the trees in the lower part of the ridge with burnished gold. I made my men rest for a few minutes on their oars, that I might indulge in the brilliant spectacle. As the rays of the sun became fainter, I saw the trees on the skirts of the mountains, even to the extremity of the point, all in apparent motion and manœuvring like an army attempting to gain a position. Soon after, the mountains began to rise, each retaining its proper form, the valleys, though high in the air, still kept their humble distance from the hills; among the real trees a few scattered rays of the immerging sun were still per-

ceptible. At length, the majestic edifice gradually descended, and to the air built fabric succeeded a general bluish which tinged the whole horizon.

When the vapours rise suddenly from the hills and are dissipated in the air, a storm is shortly expected, but when they descend, warm and calm weather is generally the result.

The Portage River is three leagues from the bottom of the bay, and in clear weather is seen from the opposite shore. The *traverse* is allowed to be three leagues, and is never safe either with a southerly or easterly wind, as the first may blow you into the lake, and the second sends in a swell, often too heavy for loaded canoes.

I have some reluctance in relating an accident which twice happened to my watch nearly in the middle of this *traverse*, as it appears to have some thing of the marvellous in it. However, so it is that, in June 1792, I took it from my pocket to see the time, and it became instantly deranged, running down the whole chain in less than a minute. I sent it down to Montreal and got it up the ensuing year, and it again played me the same prank in the same place. Now, whether this was merely an accident, or was owing to some powerful magnetic influence I cannot say.

The river empties itself into a small bay, and has a large sand bank some hundred yards from the entrance. The beach of this bay is strewed with a great variety of stones ready shaped for sharpening scythes and carpenters tools; they are of different figures, and some of them of a very fine grit. You ascend the river for two leagues; at some distance from the entrance, it divides into three branches, the middle one of which is the shortest and leads you to a lake of perhaps three leagues in circumference, the water of which is extremely black and abounds with sturgeon. The land is extremely high all around

it and, towards the south-western extremity, a small band of Indians have their garden grounds on an elevation of at least sixty feet above the level of the lake, in as rich a soil as I ever saw.

This lake narrows away to the westward, where you enter a little marshy lake about a mile long, at the farthest end of which you have to draw your canoe through the mud, at the risk of having the men mired up to the neck. Here you have to discharge and carry every thing through the mire for more than a mile; the ground then rises and you have a fine sandy path to the other end of the portage. Near this portage, the Indians have often found pieces of virgin copper of the purest kind.

At the end of the Portage the bank is at least forty feet above the lake, and is a mixture of sand, gravel and clay; the beach is covered with round whin-stone or paving stone. Here you have again a full view of the blue expanse of water, rendered still more pleasing after having emerged from hills and muddy streams.

Notonagan  
River.

The coast now bends to the south for more than twenty leagues, with the exception of four or five rocky points which project northwesterly. Here are several rivers, none of which are remarkable till you arrive at the Notonagan, which is fifteen leagues from the Portage, and is larger and deeper than any other we have hitherto spoken of.

The beach at its entrance is low and sandy, but the banks soon rise very high, and are of a stiff red clay, which tinges the water for a quarter of a mile out. This is the only river on the south shore, for one hundred and forty leagues, which does not flow black waters. A short distance from its entrance, the river has a branch coming from the south, but the main river descends from the south east, and about five leagues up this branch, there

is a mass of copper ore in its bed where the Indians go and cut off pieces with their axes, when they want it.....  
Copper ore.

In 1792, I arrived at the latter end of May, at Notonagan from La Pointe (where I had wintered,) just as a Mr. Perreault (1) a very ingenious trader descended the river. He had wintered twenty days' march up in the country, though the distance was not perhaps forty leagues, the river being unnavigable the greater part of the way, which leaves no alternative but carrying the canoes, goods and provisions.

This is done by means of leather straps or thongs the middle of which is broad and fitted to the forehead of the carrier. Carrying in the portages.

The first bale or piece is tied so as to lie a little above the reins, the second is lifted over the head and deposited, without tying, on the first, and thus loaded, the *engagés*, as they are called, trot off to the place chosen for a deposit, which they call a *pose*, and which, in large portages, are from two to three miles apart. This they repeat till the whole is transported, they then set off for the canoe, which they carry on their shoulders. They so go on till night, only stopping once for their meal, and once or twice for lighting their pipes. The packs are from eighty to one hundred and twenty pounds weight (2), and he is not looked upon as "a man" who cannot carry two; there are many who even take three and outrun their fellows. This is the mode of carrying all over the North-West, to the southward they use horses.

(1) Mr. Jean Baptiste Perreault, the author of a very interesting account which Henry Schoolcraft translated and inserted in his great work, "The History of the Indian Tribes of North America," under the title of "Indian Life in the North-Western Regions, in 1783."—Vol. III. pages 353-359.

Schoolcraft speaks of Mr. Perreault as a man of a good education, happy memory and great urbanity. After having studied at the seminary of Quebec, he left for the North-West in 1783, and remained there till he died, in 1844, at *Sault Ste Marie*, at the age of eighty four. Schoolcraft took French lessons from him at the Sault.

(2) The packs were very seldom over eighty to ninety pounds in weight: those of one hundred and twenty pounds were very few throughout the North-West.

Mr. Perreault had left his canoe at the first rapids, and made canoes of wicker work, covered with moose deer skins. to descend the river in the spring, the water being then high enough to " leap the rapids " (as it is called), (1) with safety.

He told me that some days before I saw him, the weather was extremely calm and sultry, and that he, as well as the Indians who descended with him, had heard repeated reports of a heavy canon in the direction of the Porcupine Mountain, though distant fifteen leagues; that his canoes shortly after treibled in the water, as if moved by some impulse from beneath. It must have been an earthquake. The account of the noise from the mountain has been since corroborated to me by the Indians in its neighbourhood, who said that they can remember several instances of it in the course of their lives.

The mountains from the Natonagan make a bend to the south until they approach the Porcupine, the direction of which is south-west, presenting its side to the lake. There are three or four considerable rivers between the Natonagan and the Black River.

The Porcupine Mountain and lake, or Kakewishing.

The Porcupine or *Kakewishing* Mountain is upwards of three leagues in length and much higher than any other on the south shore; on its summit there is a small round lake which has no outlet, and the water of which is remarkably black. Surrounded by steep perpendicular rocks, it is perfectly inaccessible, and inhabited by a Spirit to whom the Indians pay great respect.....

Off the western end of the mountains there lies a long and high rock which breaks off the sea, and gives a safe landing to canoes, on a little gravelly beach opposite.....

(1) *Sauter les rapides.*

There is but one river, and that a very small one, from the Black to the Montreal rivers. This last takes its rise from the *Lac au Flambeau*, *Wapwagannis* or *Flambeau Lake*, about eighty leagues to the south-west; it is one continual rapid from within ten-leagues of its source, and at a few hundred yards from its entrance, it has a fall of fifteen to twenty feet (1); the entrance of the river is masked by two high clay banks.

The land tends to the north-west and is for three leagues a stiff clay, rent into deep gullies at short distances. It then gradually declines into a sandy beach for three leagues further, until you arrive at the *Mouskisipi*, or Bad River, so called from its broad and shallow stream, which it is almost impossible to ascend, even in an Indian canoe.

This river takes its rise in the Ottawa Lake, about one hundred and twenty-five leagues to the westward. The lake has its waters divided very partially, as the chief part takes a southerly course and falls into the Mississippi, and is called Ottawa River. The *Flambeau Lake* has its waters divided also; the greater part taking a south-easterly direction to the Mississippi, and is called Ouisconsin or Medecine River (2).

From the Bad River, the coast runs north, four leagues, to *Chagowiminan* or *La Pointe*. It is all the way a fine strand, behind which are sand hills covered with bent and sand cherry shrubs, and behind the hills, a shallow bay which is a branch from the Bay St Charles. At *La Pointe*, you are nearly opposite the *Anse* or *Keeywaynan*, the distance I would conjecture to be twenty leagues in a straight line.

(1) For a description of the country and route, see: F. V. Malhiot's journal. 1st series.

(2) The outlet of the waters of *Lac au Flambeau* is by the *Flambeau* and *Sauteux* rivers, the Wisconsin taking its rise in several small lakes near *Lac du désert*, to the north-west of *Lac au Flambeau*.



The Bay St Charles runs south-west from *La Pointe* and is four leagues in depth and more than a league broad at the entrance. Opposite *La Pointe*, to the north-east, is the island of Montreal, one of the largest of those called Twelve Apostles. On the main land, the Indians had once a village amounting to two hundred huts, but since the traders have multiplied they no longer assemble at *Netoungan*, or the Sand Beach, but remain in small bands near their hunting grounds.

The  
Twelve  
Apostle  
Islands.

When you double the point of *Netoungan*, the coast tends nearly west, and is composed of high rocky points of basalt with some freestone; there is one place in particular which is an bumble resemblance of the *Portals*, but not near so high; it is about a league from *La Pointe*, and is a projection from the highest mountain from *Porcupine Bay* to *Fond-du-Lac*, a distance of more than forty-five leagues. From the summit of the mountain, you can count twenty-six islands extending to the north and north-east, islands which have never been visited by the boldest Indians, and have a chance of never being better known, as they lie out of the way of the North-West Company's vessels.

Of the islands opposite *La Pointe*, ten or twelve have been visited by the Indians, some of which have a rich soil covered with maple and beech, with deep water and fine trout fishing. The trout in this part of the lake are equal in size and richness to those of *Mackinac*; I myself saw one taken off the north-east end of *Montreal Island* which weighed fifty-two pounds.....

The Metal  
River.

There are several rivers between *La Pointe* and *Fond-du-Lac*; the distance is allowed to be thirty leagues, and the breadth of the bay, from a rocky point within a league of *Netoungan* to the *Roche debout*, or the upright rock, which is a lofty mountain right opposite, cannot be less than twenty leagues.

The Metal River is within ten leagues of Fond-du-Lac, and so called from the fact that the old chief of *La Pointe*, while descending the river, found a large piece of silver ore.

The Burnt River is three leagues to the westward of Metal River; it issues from one of the lakes of the Little Wild Oats country about thirty leagues to the south-ward, and is only navigable for small canoes.....

About sixteen years ago, *Wabogich*, or the White-Fisher, the <sup>*Wabogich,*</sup> chief of *La Pointe*, made his sugar on the skirts of a high moun- <sup>the Indian</sup> <sup>chief.</sup> tain, four days march from the entrance of the river to the south-west. His eldest daughter, then a girl of fourteen (1) with a cousin of her's who was two or three years older, rambling one day up the eastern side of the mountain, came to a perpendicular cliff which exactly fronted the rising sun. Near the base of the cliff they found a piece of yellow metal, as they called it, about eighteen inches long, a foot broad, four inches thick and perfectly smooth. It was so heavy that they could raise it only with great difficulty. After examining it for some time, it occurred to the eldest girl that it belonged to the *Gitchi Manitou*, the Great Spirit, upon which they abandoned the place with precipitation.

As the Chipeways are not idolators, it occurs to me that some of the southern tribes must have emigrated thus far to the north, and that the piece, either of copper or gold, is part of an altar dedicated to the sun. If my conjecture is right, the slab is more probably gold, as the Mexicans have more of that metal than they have of copper.

I have often regretted the premature death of the chief the same autumn that he told me the story, as he had promised to

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(1) The little girl of fourteen was exceedingly handsome; she soon after became Mr. Johnston's wife.

go and bring it to me if he recovered, and circumstances since have precluded my making an attempt to procure it.

The river of Fond-du-Lac is deep, wide and serpentine, but is navigable only for four or five leagues from its entrance. The portages are many, and difficult until you arrive at the Sand Lake, where the tribe of the Chippeways, called "Pillagers", reside. The furs of this country are the best assorted of any of this continent, and the quantity would much increase were it possible to repress the mutual incursions of the Sioux and Chippeways who carry on perpetual war. The tract of country lying between the two nations for near one hundred and fifty leagues in length and from thirty to forty in breadth, is now visited by stealth, and if peaceably hunted would be more productive than the richest mine of Peru (1).

From *Fond-du-Lac* to *Grand Portage*, the distance is about sixty leagues; the mountains are high, one of them near the *Portage* is called "The Thunder," and is the Tenerif of Lake Superior.

(1) This "account" of Lake Superior, though written in 1809, must evidently refer to the condition of the country, west of Lake Superior, several years before it was written.

Mr. David Thompson, the astronomer of the North-West Company, who explored most of this Country in 1798, found the North-West Company in full possession of the trade of that region, with regular posts established at *Pembina*, *Lac la Tortue*, *Lac des Sables*,—Sandy Lake,—and elsewhere.

Mr. George Henry Monk, a clerk of the North-West Company, in his "account of the country, from Lake Superior to the Head of the Mississippi," in 1807, says that at their first, on the south shore of St Louis River, and three miles from *Fond-du-Lac*, the Company kept two horses, a cow, a bull and a few pigs, and that, with the manure of these, they managed to cultivate a garden of three acres of "pure sand," which produced over two hundred bushels of potatoes.

At Leech Lake, in the center of this territory, the North-West Company's fort, which had been established several years before, had, he says, a garden which produced one thousand bushels of potatoes, thirty bushels of oats, cabbages, carrots, beets, beans, turnips, pumpkins and Indian corn. The Company had also introduced horses in this quarter, "even cats and hens."

On the north side of Upper Red Lake, two freemen cultivated small plots of land and more were talking of doing the same. The Sioux had then, practically, been driven out of the country.

*Fond-du-Lac* was the limit of my voyage on Lake Superior; I was there only for a few days in the autumn of 1792, so that many things worth remarking have escaped my notice.....

The east, north and north-west coasts of Lake Huron consist of basalt and coarse granite. The Bay of *Machedash* is its extremity to the eastward. There is a small river which takes its rise in Lake Simcoe and falls into the bay, but it is not navigable all its length on account of a fall. However, I am told the portage is only three leagues, and could easily be made a waggon road for small craft, and communicates with the settlements to the westward of York, from which it is only fifteen leagues distant.

The soil in the neighbourhood of York is said to be rich, and the farmers could raise a vast quantity of provisions, were they encouraged by having a sure market for them. This could easily be accomplished by opening a communication with the Bay of Machedash, from whence to the Island of St. Joseph the distance is only ninety leagues.

From the bay, a chain of islands extends to the north-west, of which St. Joseph is the last; these render the navigation perfectly safe, as you may either keep outside of them or between them and the shore, with safe anchorage everywhere. By this channel, provisions may be brought to St. Joseph, St. Mary and Michilimackinac in half the time and for half the expense they are procured from Sandwich, Detroit, &c., and the returns from the above places would arrive much sooner and safer at Montreal.

The soil about Machedash is very fine, and there is some trade with the Indians in the neighbourhood; others from a greater distance would soon be induced to visit the post when once established, nor have I a doubt on my mind but that it would

soon become the most thriving place in Upper Canada, and the center of provisions and transport trade for the fur countries.

St Joseph  
Island and  
Fort.

The greater number of the islands in the extensive chain I have just mentioned are excellent land, and St Joseph, which is one of the largest, is three fourths covered with beech, oak and maple, and capable of every degree of cultivation suited to the climate.

Fort St.  
Joseph.

The fort is erected on a small peninsula to the south west which resembles a bowl turned down, and is joined to the island by a low marshy neck, which is, however, the only spot capable of cultivation near the fort; the hills being a mere heap of rocks of a curious sort of granite, intermixed with stones of different colours, which appear inlaid in them, and of round whinstone, the whole mass is held together by a cold stiff clay.

The marshy neck is now drained and laid out in fields and gardens, which from the unremitting attention of Major Campbell and Captain Trew, of the 41st, are become highly productive, and add much to the health and comfort of the garrison, and relieve the eye from the barren ruggedness of the hill, which is certainly one of the bleakest spots in His Majesty's dominions, though at present the seat of justice, honour, politeness and of the most liberal hospitality.

Although the position of St. Joseph is far from being the most judicious that might have been chosen for a permanent post, yet, as a great deal of money has been already laid out upon it, all that is now left to the wisdom of government is to improve to the best advantage what can no longer be conveniently changed.

If I might be permitted to give an opinion, where so many of superior knowledge and of more extensive views might be consulted, I should think that the first step to be taken would be to have the island surveyed and laid out into one hundred and

two hundred acres lots, with encouragement to the settlers, proportioned to the trouble and expense of coming such a distance, which might be much alleviated by the King's vessel, which often comes to the fort, not half loaded.

A road should be opened the length of the island, which would terminate at the north-east channel, and which would enable the garrison to obstruct the invasion of St. Mary's from that quarter. A second should be cut nearly across its south-western extremity, so as to fall upon the entrance of the ship channel, where it is a little more than a gun shot over, which would correct in some degree the blunder of having placed the fort where it cannot check the progress of either vessels or bateaux.

Industrious persons would soon find their interest in locating themselves there, as they would find a constant market for every thing they could raise, either at the fort or from the North-West Company, and, in return, would add to the strength and respectability of the post, and enable it to become, what no doubt Government intended it should be, an asylum in case of rupture with America or commotion among the Indian tribes.

Of ores and minerals in this country there is little to be said as no serious researches have yet been made for them. Fossils are also rare; the petrifications at Garden River and the petrified head of a man found at St. Joseph are the only specimens I have seen. This last was almost perfect; the eyes, ears, part of the nose and mouth were quite discernable, and the interior of the mouth and cavity of the skull seemed a perfect crystal; the last could easily be distinguished through the sockets of the eyes.....

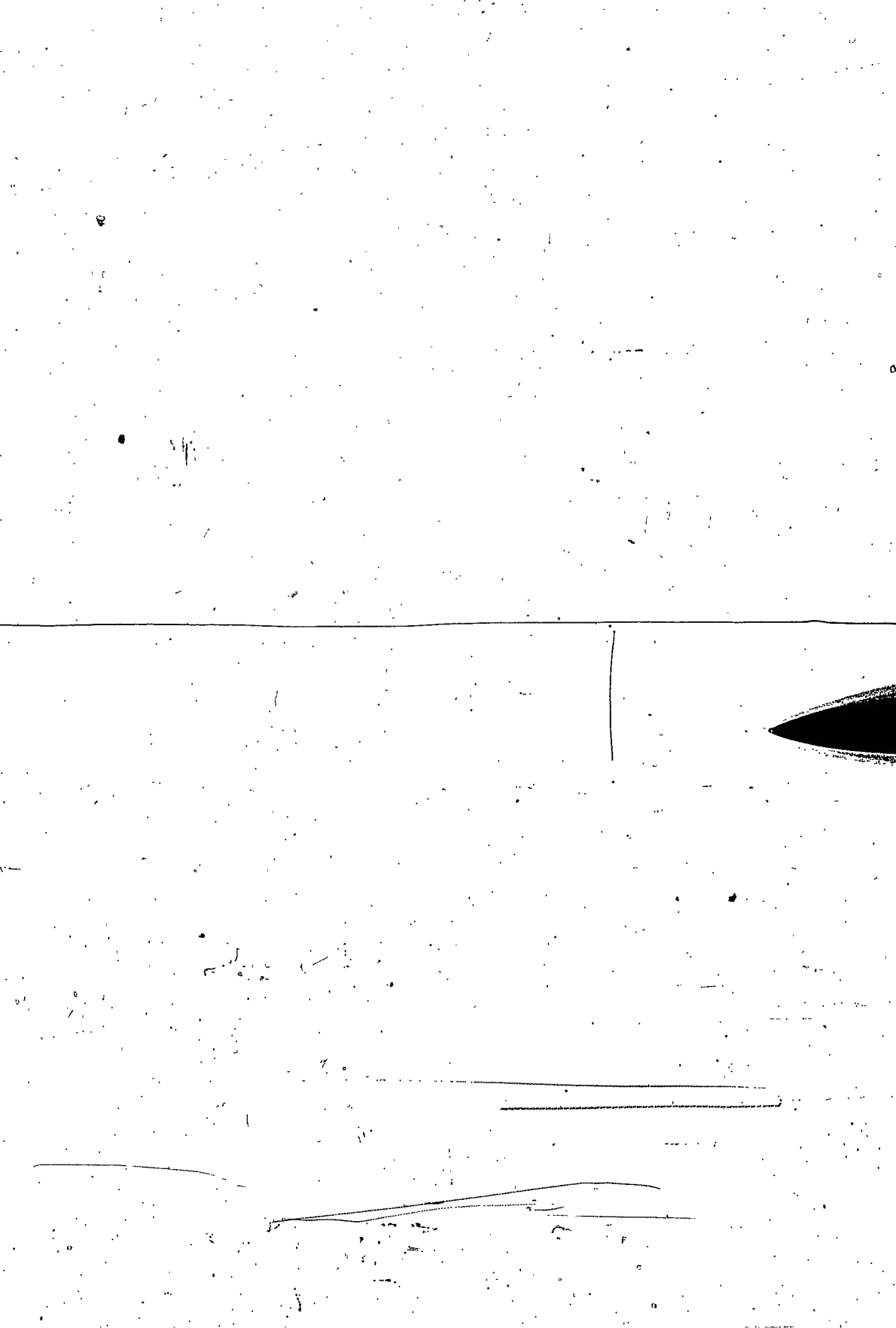
Petrifications.

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The  
climate.

Before I conclude this rude and hasty sketch, I must remark that the climate of St Mary's is extremely variable; in summer, the transitions from heat to cold are frequent and sudden, these transitions are equally great in winter, but not so much felt, as the pores are closer and the system better braced. In winter, I have known the mercury to fall from 40 to below 0 in a few hours, and in summer I have seen it above 90°, and below 45° before the sun went down. Yet it is allowed to be a very healthy place, where nothing shortens life but intemperance.

I now willingly lay down my pen, and conclude a work which, I fear, will not draw much credit on me, but as I write neither for fame nor profit, if any of my friends find an hour's amusement in it, I have my reward:





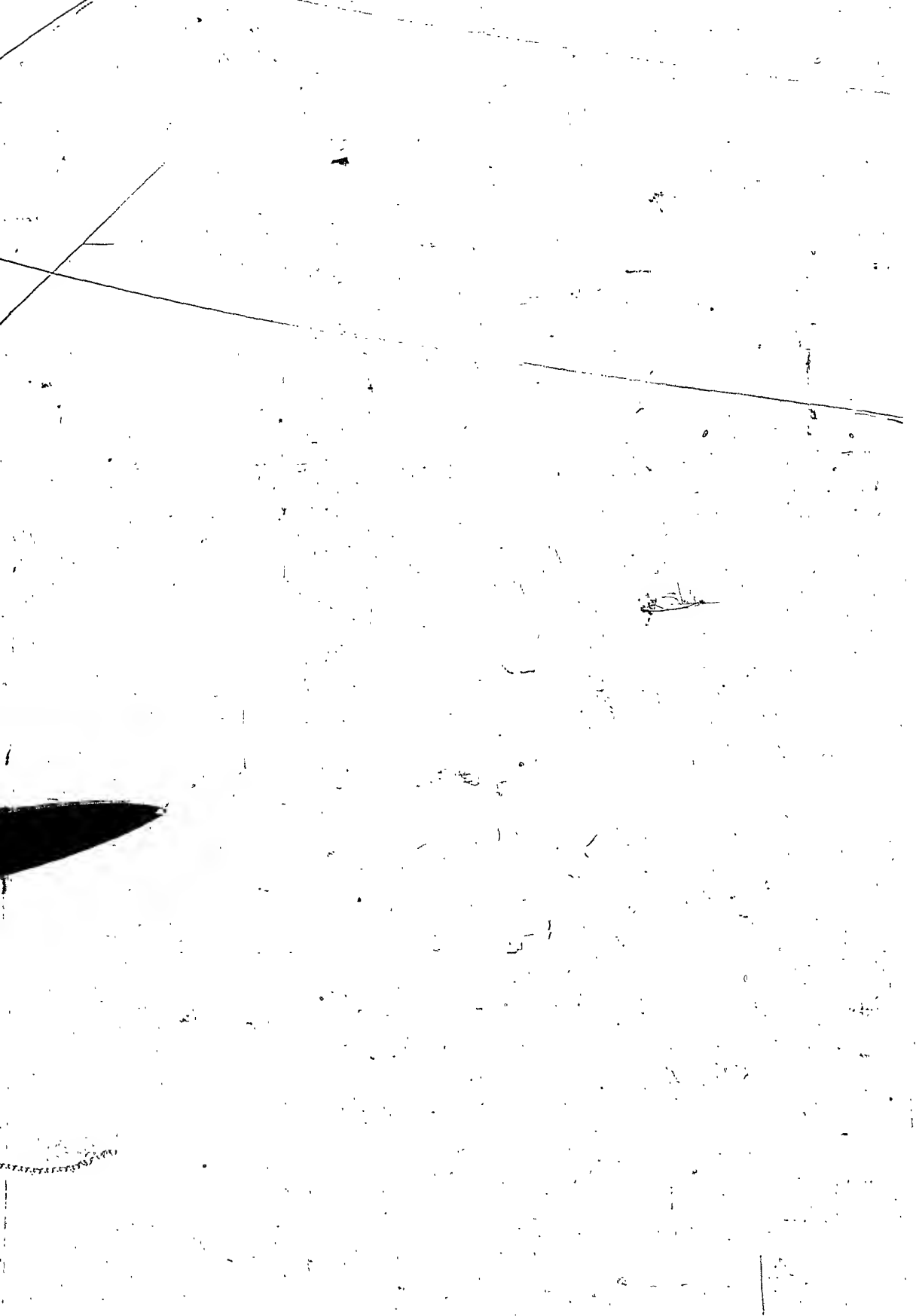


SAMUEL H. WILCOCKE

DEATH OF

MR. BENJAMIN FROBISHER

1819.



NARRATIVE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

ATTENDING THE DEATH

OF THE LATE

BENJAMIN FROBISHER, Esq.

A PARTNER OF THE

NORTH-WEST COMPANY (1)

To elucidate the causes which led to the melancholy fate of Mr. Benjamin Frobisher, it is necessary to allude to some of the circumstances attending the disputes that have for several years existed between the Hudson's Bay Company, with the late

(1) A reference to the 1st Vol. of "The Scribbler", a periodical edited in Montreal, 1822—1826, will show Mr. Samuel Hull Wilcocke to have been a most prolific and rather able writer, a contributor to several periodicals and the author of several books and essays on a variety of subjects, from a dictionary of the Dutch and English languages, to a History of Buenos Ayres and "Considerations to the Commissioners at Ghent," &c.

During the quarrels of the North-West Company with Lord Selkirk and the Hudson Bay Company, he placed his ever-ready pen at the disposal of the former, and contributed largely to the preparation of the numerous pamphlets published by them at that time, among which "Narrative of circumstances, &c." "Reports on the North-West trials at Quebec and at York," &c. "Report of Proceedings, Quebec", and also of their voluminous correspondence with their opponents and with the Imperial Government.

His "Narrative of the circumstances attending the death of the late Benjamin Frobisher, Esq.," of which this is the draft, found among Mr. Roderick McKenzie's papers, was written in 1820, and is probably his last effort in their favor; its tone clearly indicates that he was at that time a strong partisan of the Canadian traders,

Earl of Selkirk at their head, and the North-West Company of Montreal, of which latter association Mr. Frobisher was partner.

These disputes have in various shapes been laid before the public, and have also been brought before the Imperial Parliament. Without entering, therefore, into the merits or demerits of either party, or the legality or illegality of their respective claims and actions, of which the Public and Parliament will be the judges, it is nevertheless desirable to state a few prominent instances of violent conduct to which one party had recourse in order to destroy the trade, and crush the prosperity of the other.

The first blow aimed at the North-West Company was the seizure of their Depot of provisions in the Red River country, in 1814. To this succeeded the destruction of their forts or posts of Gibraltar and Pembina; then came Lord Selkirk's seizure

and a most violent opponent of their rivals in trade. But the best of friends will some times fall out, and the year 1821 found Mr. Wilcocke in bitter opposition to his old friends, who had brought very serious accusations against him before the courts of the country, while he, on the other hand, claimed that he had not been sufficiently paid for his services.

Mr. Wilcocke lingered several months in prison, but was released at the request of the American Government, and he removed to the United States, where he began, under the assumed name of "Lewis Luke Macculloch," the publication of "The Scribbler," which, though edited in Montreal, was printed by himself, first at Burlington, afterwards at Rouse's Point and then at Plattsburg. The first volume—the only one printed in Montreal,—is prefaced by a most violent attack against his former employers, whom he treats still worse than he did Lord Selkirk and his friends.

The language of the "Narrative" is exceedingly violent and would throw doubt on the veracity of the facts mentioned, were they not, in the main points, amply corroborated by more impartial testimony.

Mr. Benjamin Frobisher—most probably a son of Mr. Joseph Frobisher,—entered the service of the North-West Company about 1798. He was an able, upright and honorable man, but imperious and violent in temper. Colman, in his report on the North-West troubles, says, that he was a party to an armed demonstration against the Hudson Bay Company's fort, at Ile à la Crosse, in 1817, and that he challenged his rivals to sally and "fight it out", which challenge was very properly declined by the latter. This might in some degree have explained, but certainly not excused the harsh and cowardly treatment to which he was subjected, and which caused his death.

See: *Esquisse Historique*, pages 143-148.—Guon, "History of Manitoba."—Wentzell's Letters.

and occupation of their Head Quarters, Fort William, and ultimately the interruption of their northern trade by the outrages committed at the Grand Rapid in June, 1819, which led to Mr. Frobisher's death.

It had long been a favorite object with the Hudson's Bay Company to obtain a footing in Athabasca, and to engross the profitable trade which the North West Company carried on in that remote and extensive region. They had made several abortive attempts, but all their expeditions had resulted in distress, starvation and death to those engaged in them, in disappointment and loss to their employers.

The success of the North-West Company and the want of it by their rivals may be ascribed to the different organisation of the two companies: to the experience and providence of the one, and to the inexperience and improvidence of the other.

The only practicable route to and from Athabasca and the northern departments of the fur trade,—at least the only route that can with any degree of convenience be pursued,—is through the north-western outlet of Lake Winipeg, leading through Cedar or Bourbon Lake, to the River Saskatchewan. Between that lake and Lake Winipeg is the Grand Rapid, as it is called, consisting of two ledges of rock, the passage of which for the distance of four or five miles, is extremely difficult, and, for rather more than a mile, is wholly impracticable for loaded canoes. There is therefore a portage for that distance across which all goods have to be carried, and it is also customary for all passengers who may be on board the canoes coming down, to land at the top, and proceed along the path to the bottom of the rapid, there again to re-embark and launch into lake Winipeg.

The foot of this important pass affords an excellent military position for a blockading party, and is so situated that a handful

of men, well posted, could prevent the passage of any number of boats.

Frequently, on former occasions, the chiefs of the Hudson's Bay Company have been heard to declare that they would take possession of the Grand Rapid, fortify the pass and intercept all the North-West Company's people, canoes and goods coming from or going to Athabasca and the other northern departments. These threats, though at first they created some alarm from their repetition without any serious attempt to put them to execution, came to be disregarded, and the North-West company's partners and servants continued to pass and repass through this high road, as it may be called, with little apprehension of and precautions against attack, particularly after the proclamation of the Prince Regent, which was issued at Quebec on the 3rd of May, 1817, and had been circulated in the Indian Territories (1).

But in June, 1819, they were, to their cost, undeceived. Mr. William Williams, who had succeeded M. Semple in the service of the Hudson's Bay company under the denomination of "Governor in Chief," determined to display his energy by resorting to this long contemplated measure.

In order to strike this blow with security, a number of the discharged soldiers of the De Meuron regiment, who, in defiance of that proclamation, still retained their engagements with Lord

(1) The proclamation here alluded to enjoins to all persons in the Indian Territories to desist from any hostile aggression and attack whatsoever; requires all officers and soldiers formerly in His Majesty's service to leave the service of the Hudson's Bay company and North-West company within 24 hours after their knowledge of the proclamation, and, amongst other things, likewise specially directs that no blockade or impediment shall be made, by which any party may attempt to prevent or interrupt the free passage of traders or others with their merchandise, furs, provisions and effects throughout the lakes, rivers, roads and other usual route or communication used for the purpose of the fur trade in the interior of North America, with full and free permission for all persons to pursue their usual and accustomed, trade without hindrance or molestation.

Selkirk and the Hudson's Bay company, and who were chiefly at Red River, were engaged for this especial purpose, being promised, besides plenty liquor, tobacco and provisions, pay at the rate of a dollar a day per man whilst they continued on this particular service. They were all armed and equipped and were, the majority of them, in their uniforms and regimental caps.

Williams had two small pieces of small cannon, four pounders, with some swivels which were brought from Hudson's Bay, and, accompanied by his military banditti and a number of the Hudson's Bay Company's clerks and servants, all armed, he arrived about the 16th or 17th of June, 1810, at the Grand Rapid, where they met Mr. John Clarke (1) with two canoes of the Hudson's Bay Company, coming from Athabasca.

Charles Racette, an old Canadian hunter who had passed upwards of thirty years in the interior, and who, intending to come down to Canada, had a temporary lodge or hut at the foot of the Grand Rapid, describes their arrival as being with "Une grande barge chargée de canons, de fusils avec des bayonnettes, des lances avec des manches de bois de cinq à six pieds de longueur et d'autres armes"; adding, "Que, voyant ces attirails militaires, il soupçonnait qu'ils venaient là pour quelque chose d'extraordinaire. Que M. Williams et M. Clarke ont entré dans sa loge et lui ont dit que ni lui ni ses garçons seraient permis de sortir; qu'il les en défendait au nom du Roi, et que si aucun d'eux sortait, il serait pris tout comme les gens du Nord-Ouest; disant de plus qu'ils étaient venus là pour prendre les gens du Nord-Ouest."

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(1) See: "*Esquisse Historique*", page 130. Mr. Clarke was native of Montreal. He became Chief Factor of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Pelly. On his withdrawal from the service, he returned to Montreal, and lived in the residence called "Beaver Lodge", which had been occupied before him by his father, Mr. Simon Clarke.—Rev. Mr. Campbell, "History of St Gabriel Church."



For the more effectual fulfilment of this purpose, they landed one of the pieces of canon and two swivels, placed this artillery loaded on a point of land where it commanded the foot of the rapid; and made an abatis in front. The other piece of artillery remained in the barge, which was moved in the stream as a gun-boat, so as to command the navigation.

These were their military preparation, and they soon had an opportunity of putting their threats into execution.

The manoeuvres of Lord Selkirk had succeeded in obtaining bills of endicment to be found in Canada against an host of partners, clerks and servants of the North-West Company, for alleged crimes, the falsity of which accusations will be best evinced by reference to such trials as have taken place and the recorded verdicts of acquittal which have been given. Yet, bench warrants had been issued at Montreal, at the solicitation of his Lordship, against all whose names were found in those indictments and, being the most useful persons in the establishment of the North-West Company, whose removal from the interior and protracted prosecution would be a severe blow, and would produce an almost entire destruction of their trade.

These warrants, (or copies of them,) the legality of which is utterly denied, had been sent up the preceding year, and they furnished a convenient and opportune pretext to give some shadow of legal proceedings to the outrages which followed.

On the 18th of June, Mr. John Duncan Campbell and Mr. Benjamin Frobisher, partners of the North-West Company, with two clerks, arrived in a couple of light canoes at the Grand Rapid on their way from English River to Fort William. Mr. Campbell was one whose name was included in the fabricated charges preferred in the courts of Canada by the Earl of Selkirk, and was actually on his way to present himself before the courts that were to sit during the following October, for the

very purpose of taking cognisance of offences alleged to have been committed in the Indian Territories.

Against Mr. Frobisher not a shadow of accusation had been preferred, nor was there the remotest defensible pretext for arresting him. There were two men, Louis Majeau and Pierre Boucher, *engagés* or *voyagers* in the service of the Company, who were in the same predicament with Mr. Campbell.

On arriving at the head of the rapid, as is customary, the gentlemen landed to walk across the portage, and the canoes ran down. As soon as the canoes came within reach of Williams and his party, the two above mentioned men, Majeau and Boucher, were taken prisoners and confined in Racette's lodge under charge of two sentinels, whilst an armed party were posted to meet the gentlemen who were coming along the portage path through the woods.

Mr. Campbell's narrative of his own seizure is in the following words :

" Being ahead of the other gentlemen and nearly at the foot of the rapid, I observed a man spring up on one side of the road, but thinking he was some Canadian hunter, I paid little attention to him, when, to my great surprise, he sprang towards me and aimed a blow at my head with the butt end of his firelock, which I fortunately avoided by jumping on one side. I asked the fellow what his intentions were and whether he intended to murder me. He replied: " *coquin, " vaurien, taisez-vous, vous êtes mon prisonnier; allez, marchez devant moi et le gouverneur Williams aura soin de toi.*" Before I could say another word, I found myself surrounded by fifteen or twenty men De Meurons, armed with muskets, fixed bayonets, pistols, swords, &c., whooping, hollowing like so many demons."

Mr. Frobisher with Messrs Connolly and Macdonald, the two clerks, soon came up and were immediately surrounded and

taken prisoners. Mr. Frobisher was a man of high spirit, but of gentlemanly manners, mild and unassuming upon all occasions when the amiable qualities of social life have the means of unfolding themselves, firm in his conduct and duty when firmness was required, and spurning the idea of submitting to any species of insult, unmerited indignity, or unwarrantable oppression. Of stature rather above the common size, well built and athletic, his strength was great and his constitution unimpaired.

With the feeling natural to a man of this description, he endeavoured to resist this illegal attempt to secure his person, and demanded to know the intentions of his assailants. Guns were presented at him; he knocked the muzzles up with his arm, but was soon overpowered, rudely bid to hold his tongue, and was pushed forward at the point of the bayonet.

They were then conducted to the foot of the rapid, where they were all put into the tent or lodge of Racette, in which the two men, Majeau and Boucher, were confined. The two clerks were however liberated, when Mr. Frobisher whom they had detained, as they said, because he had attempted to defend himself, finding that there neither was nor could be any legal ground to apprehend him, attempted to follow them to the canoes, but was knocked back with the butt ends of the muskets of the soldiery. Now a scene of brutal ill-treatment took place, the consequences of which upon that gentleman's frame were such as, if not entirely, yet in a great measure, to lead to his untimely and miserable death.

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It is best detailed in the unembellished words of the deposition of Charles Racette (1) :

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(1) See *Esquisse Historique*, p. 148.

Since the publication of the first series of these documents, &c, diligent but vain researches have been made at the Court House in Quebec to find the evidence taken before the magistrates in this case, which was brought up there before the criminal

" Le déposant était alors dans sa loge ; a vu M. Fro-  
 bisher, qui paraissait bien indigné d'avoir été fait pri-  
 sonnier, aller à la porte de la loge pour parler aux  
 Meurons qui la gardaient ; qu'ayant dit quelques mots en  
 anglais que le déposant n'entendait pas, un des Meurons a  
 donné un coup de pied fort à M. Frobisher, qui l'a fait tomber  
 dans la loge ; que s'étant relevé, le même homme, qui était  
 entouré de ses camarades armés, lui a porté un coup de poing  
 fort par lequel il a été encore une fois renversé ; que s'étant  
 de nouveau relevé et voulant toujours s'adresser aux Meurons,  
 M. Frobisher, après avoir été menacé d'un coup de la crosse  
 d'un fusil, a reçu un coup sur la tête de côté avec le canon d'un  
 gros fusil de soldat qui l'a terrassé à l'instant, et qu'il tomba  
 si raide que le déposant le crut mort.

" Que toutes ces violences arrivèrent sous les yeux des dits  
 M. Clarke et M. Williams et de l'officier, sergent et caporal des  
 Meurons, qui ne faisaient aucune chose pour y prévenir ; et  
 que M. Frobisher n'a pas levé la main, ni fait aucun geste  
 menaçant, ni était aucunement armé pendant ce fracas, et  
 qu'il paraissait parler poliment quand il s'adressait aux Meu-  
 rons. "

From the effects of this fatal blow, Mr. Frobisher never  
 recovered as will be seen in the sequel.

The testimony here given of an impartial, uninterested eye  
 witness displays the brutal ferocity which accompanied these  
 outrages, which were perpetrated in contempt of all law and of  
 all superior authority.

court, on the 29th of October, 1819. It has also been impossible to trace the case  
 itself any further than that a true bill was found on that day against Messrs Williams  
 and John Clarke. On account of some objections, the case could not be proceeded with  
 during the term, and it does not appear to have been called up again.

It is quite probable that the coalition which intervened soon after between the  
 contesting parties put an end to the proceedings.

When Mr. Campbell asked to see the warrant upon which he was stated to be apprehended, Mr. Williams told him, in so many words, that legal proceedings were all damned nonsense in the North-West, and that having now the advantage, he would take good care to keep it, and would follow up the blow he had struck.

Mr. Campbell and Mr. Frobisher were then conveyed in a canoe to a small island in the middle of the stream, about a quarter of a mile from the shore, where, with the two men before mentioned, they were placed under strict confinement in a tent guarded by de Meuron soldiers, and out of which they were not allowed to stir, though the heat was intense and the mosquitoes very numerous, the underwood being remarkably thick on the island.

In the mutilated fragments of Mr. Frobisher's journal (kept in pencil all along, for he was not allowed pen and ink,) which were found with his corpse, he thus describes the first part of his treatment.

" June 19.—We were crossed over to an island in the middle of the stream, with two of our men. Here we were not suffered to stir out of the tent, or even to satisfy the private calls of nature without being threatened to be beaten down with a musket, and a man..... with a loaded one attending us; all of this by the orders of a man who titles himself " Governor Williams ". Our food, rotten pemican.

" The cause of treating me thus is merely because I attempted to resist when those ruffians took me, and told them, man to man, I did not fear them.

Racette, the Canadian, with his wife and two sons and an Indian family that were there, were also ordered over to the island, and their tents and canoes forcibly taken away from them, most likely to prevent any intelligence reaching the other

parties of North-West canoes which were expected, and thus prevent Williams from following up his blow.

He did follow it up as far as in his power lay. On the 20th of June, the brigade of the loaded canoes of the North-West Company from English River reached the Grand Rapid, at the head of which they were waylaid, and the guide who had them in charge, Joseph Paul, with his son Pierre Paul were taken prisoners out of them. These men's names were likewise included in the charges before alluded to, and they were then on their route to Canada, to present themselves for trial.

The valuable property which was on board those canoes was doubtless a great temptation for Williams and his armed banditti, but this would have been so glaring a highway robbery, that even their voracious rapacity shrunk from the commission of it. True, however, to their principle of doing all the mischief in their power, they would not allow Paul to guide the canoes down the first dangerous rapid—there are two, almost immediately succeeding one another.—though he represented that he was the only man capable of it, in the hopes, no doubt, that some disaster might ensue.

The canoes, however, excepting Paul's, which was left behind, fortunately got down without any accident; seeing that they would not permit him to guide his own canoe down, he told Amable Turcotte and Joseph Lepine, two of the men he considered most capable, to go up and bring down his canoe. They did the work safely, and having thus shewn themselves the next best guides in the brigade, they were immediately taken prisoners, without the slightest alleged pretence or accusation.

At the second rapid, Williams asked Paul whom he would nominate to guide the canoes, upon which the latter replied that he would nominate none, as, if he did, they too would be taken prisoners.

The brigade, however, which consisted of seven canoes, met with no serious accident, although in great confusion from the want of guides and steersmen, they, with much difficulty, loss of time and danger, prosecuted their voyage to destination.

Mr. Frobisher and Mr. Campbell, with the men then taken, were sent off early in the morning of the 22nd of June in separate canoes for Jack River, whence their further adventures will be hereafter detailed. when the next exploit of Williams and his gang has been recounted.

In the course of the following day, 23rd of June, two other light canoes belonging to the North-West Company reached the pass that had been thus blockaded. In these were Mr. Angus Shaw, Mr. John George MacTavish and Mr. William McIntosh, partners of that company. As usual, in order to lighten the canoes, Messieurs Shaw and MacTavish, with their servants and six of the canoe men, landed at the head of the rapid to walk down the portage, whilst Mr. MacIntosh, being in a bad state of health and unable to endure the fatigue of walking, remained in his canoe to shoot the rapid.

When this party came to the foot of the rapid, and were descried by the sentinel, an alarm was given, and they were surrounded by the armed soldiers, and Mr. MacTavish was told he was a prisoner, but neither at that, nor at any other time, did Williams, or any other person under his command, produce any authority or warrant, or assign any lawful cause or even pretext for arresting him.

Mr. MacTavish was separated from Mr. Shaw and put under a guard of four men armed with muskets. Upon Mr. Shaw remonstrating with Mr. Williams against this illegal stoppage of the King's highway, and the scandalous defiance it evinced of the proclamation issued by the Prince Regent, he replied in

great rage: "I do not care a curse for the Prince Regent's proclamation; Lord Bathurst and Sir John Sherbrooke by whom it was framed are d..... rascals. I act upon the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, and as a governor and magistrate in these territories, I have sufficient authority and will do as I think proper."

Williams and his associates likewise uttered a torrent of abuse against the judges and courts of justice in Canada—though they have pretended to act upon warrants granted by the Chief Justice of Montreal. The whole party abused Mr. Shaw in the grossest manner, several threatened his life, and one soldier clubbed his rifle to strike him, but an old Frenchman stepped in and pushed him away. Another cocked and levelled his gun at Mr. Shaw's breast, but was prevented firing by one of his comrades, a Swiss, who pushed it aside.

During the altercation, the canoes came in sight, having run down the rapids, and Williams immediately ordered Mr. MacIntosh to be seized and dragged on shore, which was accordingly done in a violent and brutal manner, he being seized by the neck and hauled through the water to land, and on his expostulating, one of the Meuron soldiers struck him a heavy blow with the butt end of his musket.

An Iroquois Indian, named Ogoniarto, who was an expert steersman, was likewise dragged ashore and made a prisoner of. Neither for the arrest of this man, nor against Mr. MacIntosh could they allege the slightest pretence, nor did they ever, but Mr. MacIntosh had rendered himself obnoxious to their party by successfully resisting an attempt made the year before by John Clarke, who was one of the present gang, to take forcible possession of Fort Vermilion, the principal North-West establishment on Peace River, on which occasion, although Clarke had actually entered the fort with a number of armed men, MacIntosh, though at first surprised and taken, got loose and, at



the head of no more than four Canadians, succeeded in driving out the assailants.

Mr. Shaw upon witnessing this shameful treatment again remonstrated with Williams on the cruelty of such conduct towards one wholly defenseless and in his power, but the only answer he could obtain was a repetition of invective and menace.

Upon his again warning Williams of his presumption in thus acting in direct violation of the Prince Regent's proclamation commanding all Her Majesty's subjects to keep the peace and, on no account and under no pretence of supposed rights, to blockade or interrupt the communication by which the furtrade was carried on, the "Governor" spoke with the utmost contempt of the proclamation and of those by whom it was framed saying:

"As for Lord Bathurst, (d..... him,) he is bribed by the North-West gold; and Sir John Sherbrooke, the judges, juries and crown officers of Canada are a set of d..... rascals, and for our part, we shall act independantly of the rascally government of Canada. Lord Bathurst will be turned out of office by Lord Selkirk as soon as he gets to England, which is doubtless the case ere this, and I shall make use of the colonists and every other means in my power to drive out of the country every d..... North-Wester it contains, or perish in the attempt." It was not once, but frequently that such language was used, displaying the insolence of an upstart, the ignorance of a vulgar hireling and the ferocity of a lawless plunderer.

The trunks of the North-West gentlemen were then overhauled, pillaged of sundry articles, and all papers, private and public, taken out. The trunk containing the books, accounts, inventories, letters and other papers relating to the Athabasca department were a particularly welcome prize. The seals of

a great many private letters were broken and the contents perused, and Williams selected and kept all the books, inventories, letters, &c. which he thought of importance, either for rivaling the North-West Company's trade, or for pursuing the system of malicious persecution that had been for so long a time in activity against their proprietors and servants.

To see one's private papers rifled; to behold the concerns of one's trade examined into and ransacked with avidity, cannot be done without exciting resentment and provoking remarks, but upon Williams observing at the time that, by seizing the persons of the North-West Partners, and taking possession of their papers and property, he would strike them such a blow as they would not soon recover from, and put a speedy conclusion to their contest with the Hudson's Bay Company, Mr. Shaw could not but conclude that when Williams talked of seizing the property of the North-West Company, he must mean the valuable returns in furs from Athabasca and Lesser Slave Lake, which, by the inspection of the papers before him, he knew were on the way, and must necessarily pass the Grand Rapid.

He concluded, therefore, it would be best to give up useless altercation and remonstrance, and, in hope of escaping from the band of desperadoes, and to be able to prevent the consummation of their designs by giving timely intelligence of them, he made an attempt to proceed to his canoe to embark when he was stopped, and again put in fear of his life.

His remonstrances were now repeated, and he added that, had he been aware of the intention with which the ambush had been placed, he would have, with a force of 250 men at least, prepared to compel them to respect the persons and property of his partners and himself.

An exclamation then arose of, "he threatens us!", and Williams immediately ordered John Clarke and one Brown to take him into custody, which they did, each of them giving him a blow at the same time, whilst neither, then nor at any other time, was any warrant produced, nor any authority, cause or pretext assigned for such arrest.

But it is tiresome and sickening to dwell upon these repeated instances of lawless tyranny and brutal violence; the offended laws of the country will one day visit the perpetrators, and inflict *legal* punishment, however inadequate it may be to the enormity of the offence and the disastrous and fatal consequences which ensued.

The three gentlemen, with the Iroquois Ogoniarto and Edward Cain, Mr. McTavish's servant, who had also been arrested without any alleged pretext whatsoever, were, in the same manner as their predecessors, confined in the island at the foot of the rapid with a guard placed over them, who had orders to shoot any one who should show a disposition to escape.

Here they were confined for eight days. On an occasion, while conversing with their guard, upon having been assured that it was the intention of Williams that if the canoes of the North-West Company had attempted to pass, they would have been fired upon, as there were canons pointed and loaded ready to sink any canoe which might attempt it, Mr. McTavish asked one of the men who appeared to be possessed of more feeling than his companions, whether it was really their intention to shed blood if the canoes had attempted to pass, on which he answered: "Those men"—the de Meuron's soldiers from Red River:—"will do whatever they are ordered, and I am certain if there was a scuffle and we had the victory, few would live to accuse us of killing their companions."

Racette, the Canadian before mentioned, was all this while also confined to the island. His opinion of this *soldatesque* was not the most favorable. He states that "Il a dû ainsi laisser à l'abandon tous ses biens et vivres, qui furent en grande partie gaspillés par ces gens qu'il ne pouvait considérer que comme une bande de voleurs et d'assassins, et qui se vantaient tous les jours de leurs exploits quand ils étaient au service de Bonaparte."

On the 30th of June, an alarm was given in William's camp upon two canoes being descried coming down the rapid. The men turned out under arms, but it was found that these canoes belonged to the Hudson's Bay Company, and had on board Colin Robertson and another clerk of that company.

To account for the appearance of Colin Robertson at this time and place, it is necessary to state that having been detained at Fort Chipewyan during the winter, where he was treated and attended to in the same manner as the North-West partners, he was, in May, brought out along with the gentlemen intending to proceed to Montreal in order there to answer for his conduct. On the way, he was allowed on his parole of honour to visit the Hudson's Bay Company's post and people at *Ile à la Crosse*, whence he returned and proceeded on with the North-West people to the next establishment of the Hudson's Bay company, called Cumberland House. He was here again permitted to visit the fort and people there upon his parole of honour, but broke his parole and did not return in custody.

These canoes, it appears, brought a rumour that a number of Halfbreeds and Indians were mustering to remove the blockade and release the prisoners; this struck such a panic into the doughty "Governor" and his party, that on the following day he broke up his camp early in the morning in great hurry and confusion, and proceeded with his flotilla and all his forces,

which now consisted of 120 men, toward the north end of Lake Winipeg, taking with him his prisoners, who were each put in a separate embarkation.

In the night of that day Mr. William MacIntosh contrived to make his escape. His indisposition, which was diarrhea, required his frequent retirement, and gave him the opportunity, while they were encamped on a peninsula in the lake to construct, at various short intervals in the wood close to the encampment, a sort of rough raft with branches of trees. Having prepared the frail embarkation, he boldly entrusted himself on it at night to cross the water, with a branch for a paddle; he succeeded in gaining the opposite shore unperceived, and got along the coast of the lake on foot, suffering much hardship from the want of provisions, from fatigue and illness, until he fortunately hailed a canoe which was passing, and was conveyed to *Bas de la Rivière*.

On his being missed in the morning, a hue and cry was raised, and Williams remained six hours searching for him in the woods. Not having, however, any idea that he could have the means of crossing the water, they only searched on their own side, by which their object was frustrated. Nor were the party left behind to continue search more successful.

The escape of Mr. MacIntosh was a grievous vexation to his enemies, and John Clarke, who was at the head of the searching party, and who entertained a peculiar and personal rancour against him, declared that if he found him he would shoot him. Nay, so much were they annoyed at this circumstance that when Clarke returned at Norway House,—an establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company, at the north end of Lake Winipeg—without Mr. MacIntosh, Williams sent out a band of Indians in further pursuit, promising them a reward for bringing him in "dead or alive."

It is now time to return to Mr. Frobisher and Mr. Campbell whom we left embarking for Jack River, on the 22 of June. Mr. Frobisher's mutilated journal continues as follows :

" June 23rd.—Marched the whole day and did not encamp until dark"—" To march " is the Canadian term for traveling, and is as frequently, if not oftener, applied to express the progress of a canoe or boat as of a pedestrian.—" I was guarded in the canoe by one Miles, with loaded pistols ; 24 hours without eating. The brigade consisted of seven canoes, each of us in a separate canoe, say five men and Paul, the guide.

" June 24th.—We arrived at their fort, Pike River—Jack River—early in the morning, when, after remaining some time on the beach, we were shut up with our men in a small room, say, eight of us. We embarked after a few hours detention and were ordered to proceed to..... Fort..... there.....we.....

A chasm is here supplied from Mr. Campbell's narrative, who says :

" We were here told that Williams had sent orders to the person in charge to have us sent down to York Factory. This we protested against, and demanded to be sent by way of Fort William, that being the shortest route ; but they would not, or, as they said, could not act contrary to the orders of Williams ; that it would make no material difference, as we should not be detained any time at York Factory, there being always a schooner in readiness which constantly runs between that place and Moose Factory, in St James' Bay, from which place we should have an easy communication by way of Michipicoton or Temiscaming. However indignant we might feel at the duplicity of these people, we were obliged to submit, and accordingly took our departure.

Mr. Frobisher's journal resumed :

" June, 25th.—We marched hard all day ; passed some very shallow rivers and lakes.

" June, 26th.—Embarked early ; passed four portages, our course, due north. This road is extremely bad for loaded canoes ; guarded by Miles with loaded pistols.

" June, 27th.—Arrived early at an establishment under Linklater, on the ..... of a large lake ;"—Oxford House, on the bank of *Lac du milieu* or middle lake,—" remained two hours ; embarked, passed several bad rapids and falls ; encamped in a large lake.

" Monday, June, 28th.—We passed one large lake, where they have an establishment, one Sutherland, master,"—Logan's depot, at swampy lake,— " The declivity from this and before is extreme, a succession of rapids with four portages.....  
" .....the current with.....

" Tuesday, June, 29th.—We arrived at a depot called " The Rock," in charge of one Bunn, a very polite man. The Rock is a continued rapid ; passed seven rapids. I was guarded so far with guns and loaded pistols.

" Wednesday, June, 30th.—We were embarked in two light canoes for York Factory.

" July, 1.—Arrived early in the morning at that fort.....  
" ..... with our men, all together in a complete hogsty, and forbid to stir out of the fort.

" July, 2nd.—We are allowed nothing but bad water to drink, and served very scantily in provision.

" July, 23rd.—Our situation is really degrading ! Is it possible the laws of our country allow this ! we are served with rotten meat."

Here another chasm is supplied from Mr. Campbell's narrative :

" We were told by Swain (the clerk in charge,) that he had orders from Williams only to be allowed to walk about in the inside of the fort, and that if either of us attempted to go

“ beyond the limits prescribed, we would be more closely confined.

“ The place which was allotted to us was a very small room with four or five cabins or berths for beds, and filled with dirt and vermin. The men were confined in the same place. Swain announced to us that we would not be allowed any liquor, even by paying for it; and that, as to diet, we would be served out of the kitchen; also, that we would not be allowed pen, ink or paper unless we promised that our writing should be inspected by him. On this condition, both Mr. Frobisher and myself declined accepting of their “indulgence.”

“ Iron bars were put into the windows of our quarters. Around this house or hut, which was very low, lay heaps of filth and dirt, and adjoining the house there was a place in which they were in the habit of keeping fresh venison, and as it had not been properly cleaned out, swarms of maggots issued from it, came through the crevices of our apartment and crawled into our beds. We complained of this to Swain, but were scarcely listened to, and it was not till after making use of hot water and lye for some time that we got rid of these unpleasant companions. Our diet was the refuse of their kitchen, and even that was not regularly given ” .....

Mr. Frobisher's journal resumed :

“ July, 8th.—Our treatment is infamous; we have a large keg of salt water to drink, there having been pork in it prior to our making use of it. We are all sick with colds and cannot obtain the least remedy.

“ July, 9th.—Nine boats went off. There seems no hopes of our speedy delivery from this.

“ July, 10th.—Every man in the fort is forbid speaking to us; were we in the power of the Turk, we would not be worse off.



"July, 11th.—We are anxious for the Governor's arrival.  
 "This violation of the Prince Regent's proclamation.....  
 .....

On the 12th of July, Messrs. Shaw and McTavish arrived at York Factory. After the escape of Mr. MacIntosh they were conveyed to Norway House, an establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company, situated at the north end of Lake Winipeg, where all the prisoners were confined on a small rocky island in the lake, about a mile from the Fort. Here, Mr. McTavish, having been told that it was intended to send him to the Rock, on the way to York Factory, wrote a letter to Williams reminding him of his promise to send them to Canada. The next morning, Williams came over to the island and told Mr. McTavish that he intended to send him to England, and upon being reproached with the breach of his promise, to send them all to Canada, he carelessly replied, "It may be so, but I changed my mind."

To Mr. Shaw's requisition to be sent to Canada, he said he had neither canoes nor men to spare for his conveyance, that, therefore, he must proceed to the Rock, where he pledged his word—*risum teneatis*—to provide the means to convey him to Canada, admitting at the same time that he had no charge whatever to allege against him. On Mr. Shaw's remonstrating against being thus dragged about as a prisoner without any cause, and in direct violation of his promise, he replied, in a passion: "It signifies nothing what you say or what you think, you are now in my power, and I will dispose of you as I think proper." These gentlemen were accordingly conveyed to the Rock, but there, too, as was naturally to be expected from such characters, no regard was paid to the pledge given, and they were carried on to York Factory.

During their journey, Edward Cain, Mr. MacTavish's servant and Ogoniarto, the Iroquois steersman, were separated from them.

and endeavoured to be decoyed into the Hudson's Bay Company's service. The former pretended to acquiesce, and was after a while sent to one of their posts in the Nepigon country, where, as soon as he found a favorable opportunity, he left them, and found refuge at one of the North-West Company's posts there.

Ogoniarto relates that at a post beyond Jack River—probably the Rock—he was left behind and at liberty ; that both Clarke and Robertson then told him they had no right to keep him prisoner, but that, if he chose, they would engage him in the service of the Hudson's Bay Company. He replied that he would not come under any engagement there, but would see what he might do when he got down to Montreal ; that one day Colin Robertson called him into his room and said : *Tiens ! Thomas, je te fais présent de deux cents francs ; voilà un écrit, tu iras au bureau à Montréal et tu les recevras, mais il faut que tu t'engages pour nous à Montréal.* He was afterwards embarked, in a canoe with Robertson and Clarke, and having met a canoe of winterers who were going down, he was put on board, and came by way of Sault Ste Marie and Upper Canada to Montreal.

To return to the prisoners at York Factory : Mr. Shaw and Mr. MacTavish were assigned apartments within the factory, with permission to walk on the leads or flat roof, but with strict orders not to pass the gate, and they were likewise forbidden from holding any communication with the other gentlemen, their fellow sufferers.

Mr Frobisher's journal resumed :

" July, 13th.—We are deprived of..... intercourse with Messrs. Shaw and MacTavish.

" July, 14th.—We applied for medicine, being all sick, but were refused.....

" July, 16th.—Excessive warm.....prison..... Messrs. Shaw and  
 " MacTavish, a proof they do not intend to send them.....  
 " ..... we can get no meat or water without much  
 " difficulty, and when we do get it, we are indebted for it to the  
 " humanity of one Mackenzie.

" July, 17th.—Extreme sultry.....

" July..... We find the time tedious.....

" ..... my country will..... in defiance of all  
 " law and treated as the vilest of criminals.

" July, 23rd.—We are suffocated with heat and stench, our  
 " small house being full of maggots.

" July, 24th.—Mr. Campbell"—a Hudson's Bay clerk from  
 Athabasca.—" and..... arrived..... of our desti-  
 " nation; God help us under such tyranny."

" July, 28th.—We can get no water to drink: liquors of all  
 " kinds are forbid.

" 29th.—The Governor arrived; we are impatient to see  
 " what.....after such a long captivity as we  
 " have endured."

Here the journal becomes perfectly illegible, nor can any thing  
 be made out till the 13th of October, when Mr. Frobisher had  
 effected his escape.

It appears that the hardships he endured and the anxiety of  
 his mind completely undermined his health, and that his intel-  
 lects were not a little impaired, attributable no doubt greatly to  
 the severe blows on the head which he had received, and from  
 the effects of which he never ceased complaining, being also,  
 in consequence, subject to a giddiness which took him at times,  
 and rendered him incapable of standing.

Mr. Campbell's narrative continues to show in forcible colours the misery of their situation, and the effects produced on their health by their ill-treatment.

"We found ourselves," he says, "daily more neglected; the season was very sultry and the water very bad; we could scarcely obtain a sufficiency of this necessary article, bad as it was, and were therefore obliged to employ the Indians about the place to bring in some in a clandestine manner, for which we gave them part of our rations.

"We were all afflicted with severe colds. I applied for medicines and liquor, which I obtained sometime after, apparently with great reluctance. What I received was a phiol of peppermint and a quart of rum, which we got on account of the North-West Company. Mr. Shaw was at this time very ill with cold, Mr. MacTavish was also indisposed, and Mr. Frobisher was reduced to a mere skeleton. Our situation was truly distressing! I enjoyed better health than the others, but was far from being well. No one appeared inclined to give any relief; pity was totally out of question.

"We requested permission to visit Messrs. Shaw and MacTavish, and to take the air on the outside of the fort, but were refused and spurned at. From this dilemma we were in we received timely assistance from a quarter I least expected.

"There was among the servants in the kitchen a young man who had served as waiting man to one of the Hudson's Bay masters, and had wintered at the same place I had. This man feeling for our miserable situation, one day, when he brought in some victuals, told me he had three quarts of rum, ten pounds of loaf sugar and a pound of tea, which he begged me to accept, and that he would put it through the grating of one of the back windows at night, adding that whenever he could find a favorable opportunity he would send to me from the

“kitchen the best victuals he could procure. To this generous fellow I gave a draft on our house in England for a few pounds, of which he accepted after much entreaty.

“Williams continued at the depot (the Rock,) until late in the season, remaining there to arrange all their canoes and men for the northern departments, and after seeing them all off, he came down to York Factory. A few days previous to his arrival, Messrs. Shaw and MacTavish were put in a small building or hut, back in the yard, the floor of which was overflowed whenever it rained. On Williams's arrival, Mr. Frobisher, myself and the men who were with us were suddenly confined to even more narrow limits and to a space nearly square, between our building and the range of buildings occupied by the clerks of the H. B. Co. so that whenever we came out to take the air we were exposed to the view of every one, and several times we were ordered to retire before dark and get to bed and sleep when the weather was almost suffocating.”

On Williams's arrival, a fresh endeavour was made and the imprisoned gentlemen again demanded to be sent off to Montreal. On the 3rd of August, Mr. Shaw was admitted to an interview with the governor, who, upon being again upbraided for his breach of promise, replied that he was indifferent what might be thought of his conduct, that as “Governor in Chief” of Rupert's Land, and acting upon the charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, he was authorized to treat all strangers and intruders in their territory as he thought fit. That he would require Mr. Shaw to enter into recognisance to keep the peace, and Mr. MacTavish, with Mr. Shaw as is surety, to enter in a recognisance to appear in a court of justice to answer to some charge which was not specified, and on these conditions he would send those two gentlemen to Moose Factory to be thence conveyed to Canada, but otherwise that they would be detained at York Factory all winter.

A prospect of some alleviation of their sufferings now appeared by the arrival from England, on the 30th August, of the Hudson's Bay Company's ship "Prince of Wales". On board of the vessel came as passengers; Lieutenant Franklin of the Royal Navy and three other gentlemen, forming an expedition despatched by Government to pursue discoveries towards the North Pole by Coppermine and MacKenzie's rivers.

This expedition entered into simultaneously with that of Lieut. Parry by sea—the last account from whom left him at the entrance of Sir James Lancaster's sound, in Baffin's Bay—will probably determine the long contested questions of the existence of a North-West Passage, the extent of the continent of America towards the North Pole and the insularity of Greenland. Lt. Franklin reached Fort Chipewyan in        days from Hudson's Bay, and wintered there. In the spring of this year he proceeded with guides, hunters, dogs and sledges furnished by the North-West Company, and when last heard of was, at the end of May on the point of starting from the North West Company's fort at Great Slave Lake.

Lieutenant Franklin was the bearer of letters of introduction to several of the North-West partners whom he expected to meet in the interior, and, amongst them, he had letters to Mr. Shaw, Mr. MacTavish and Mr. Campbell.

The visits which the gentlemen of this mission made to the prisoners and the attention they paid them were evidently galling to their gaolers, but from their altered deportment in consequence, Messrs. Shaw and MacTavish were induced to apply for leave to embark for England on board the "Prince of Wales", to which Williams, after some demur, consented on condition of their entering into such recognisance as he would dictate, to which, as the only means of escaping from their rigorous captivity, they agreed.

Two papers were accordingly executed, of which they could not obtain copies, but which purported to be recognisances: one from Mr. MacTavish, with Mr. Shaw as his surety, to appear in a Court of Justice in England or Canada, under a penalty of three thousand pounds, but not specifying any charge upon which he was to appear, and another from Mr. Shaw, to keep the peace, under the like penalty, and the same day Williams left for the interior.

Mr. Campbell and Mr. Frobisher equally applied to know their fate. The latter received no answer, but the former was apprized, about the 3rd of September, that it was determined he should be embarked with Joseph Paul, Pierre Paul, Louis Mageau and Pierre Boucher on board the brig Weir, Captain Thompson, for Moose Factory, thence to be sent to Canada.

They embarked on the 7th and arrived at Moose on the 26th of September, whence, after a most fatiguing and perilous journey by New-Brunswick (1) and Michipicoton, (which they reached on the 18th of October,) and Sault Ste Marie and Penetanguishine, having passed by way of Holland Landing and York, they got to Montréal on the 30th of November, 1819.

Nothing further is necessary to be stated relating to them than that, having been all of them on their way to Canada to obtain their trials on the charges brought against them, they were, by having been detained so long at the Bay, and carried around so many hundred miles out of their way, precluded from appearing at the court of Oyer and Terminer which had been appointed to meet at Quebec on the 21st of October for the special purpose, and for which they would have been in ample time, had they proceeded by the ordinary route.

Mr. Frobisher now found himself alone with the two Canadians, Turcotte and Lépine, who had been taken out of the En-

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(1) New-Brunswick Fort, near the height of land, on the Moose River.

glish River brigade with the Pauls ; his enfeebled body and irritated mind could scarcely support the horror of his situation. As a last effort, and previous to the sailing of the " Prince of Wales " in which he understood his friends Messrs Shaw and MacTavish were to be sent to England, but with whom he was debarred from having an interview, it appears that he addressed a letter to " Governor " Williams, of which the following mutilated copy was found in his pocket book.

" York Factory, sept 16th 1819.

" Seriously reflecting upon the situation in which I shall be placed by your determination of detaining me here all winter, in justice to myself, I once more take the liberty of suggesting to you what ought surely to be regarded as satisfactory. I will become responsible in any sum you may think proper to dictate for my appearance in a court of justice, either in England or in Canada, provided you grant me a passage to England, and, if necessary, I will join in my recognisance Messrs Shaw and MacTavish, who, knowing my means, can have no objection to become my sureties. The critical state of my health imperiously demand this ".....

The savages who were his keepers paid no attention to this, and he was doomed to experience the mortifying and miserable prospect of a dreary imprisonment during a long Hudson's Bay winter, when the cold is frequently 60° below the freezing point, and in the hands of a set of merciless enemies.

On the 20th of September, Williams left York Factory for the interior, and on the 25th, the " Prince of Wales " sailed for England with Messrs Shaw and MacTavish, as steerage passengers!

We will follow the fate of those gentlemen no farther than to say that not the slightest attempt has been made, either in Eng-



land or Canada, to fasten upon them any obligation or offence, nor in any way to justify the execrable treatment they met with.

That the real object of the aggressions and outrages that have been detailed was not in any degree to advance the ends of justice, or even to follow up the Earl of Selkirk's malicious prosecutions, but to cripple the means, destroy the energy and finally to expel the traders of the North-West Company from the country, is made evident and is corroborated also by a variety of other circumstances, besides those already mentioned.

Amongst other things, it is testified that John Clarke—one of the foremost and most violent of the party, as well as one of the most unguarded,—declared: “that they arrested the partners of the North-West Company and their men in order to retard them, so that the Hudson's Bay people might, the ensuing season, get to their wintering grounds and trading posts before those of the North-West company,” With regard to Ogoniarto, the steersman:—“that he had no orders to take him, but that he did so merely to detain and inconvenience the canoes”;—and speaking of Joseph Paul, who was left pretty much at liberty the whole time:—“that he was treated so because they expected to gain him over to their side,” Mr. Paul's own declaration on this head states:

“Qu'il est convaincu que le but et le motif de leur arrestation n'était que de faire tort à la société du Nord-Ouest, en la privant des services de leurs engagés; qu'il eut occasion en parlant avec John Clarke, de lui faire connaître son innocence, comme son intention et son désir d'aller à Montréal pour se justifier, Clarke lui dit qu'on connaissait tout cela, mais que lui, étant un homme très utile à ses bourgeois, ils voulaient l'avoir à leur service, c'était pourquoi on l'avait fait prisonnier et non pas pour lui faire de la peine, disant de plus qu'on avait couru après lui depuis quatre ans.

“ Que d'autres fois on lui disait : “ donnez-nous seulement  
 “ votre parole que vous monterez pour nous,” et voyant qu'il  
 “ ne voulait pas quitter le service de la Compagnie du Nord-  
 “ Ouest, ils tâchaient de lui persuader qu'ils le gagneraient tôt  
 “ ou tard, disant qu'avec de l'argent ils l'auraient tout comme  
 “ un autre. Que c'était leur intention de se rendre maître des  
 “ meilleurs hommes de la Compagnie du Nord Ouest, ce qui  
 “ leur ferait beaucoup de tort, et cela pour se dédommager du  
 “ mauvais succès qu'eux—les gens de la Baie d'Hudson,—  
 “ avaient eus jusqu'alors dans leur commerce en Athabasca.”

Multiplied instances might be adduced of similar sentiments and conduct, but nothing will be here stated than the additional circumstance that John MacLeod, the person upon whose testimony the charge against Joseph Paul, Pierre Paul and Pierre Boucher was grounded, and who was also one of the party at the Grand Rapid when they were taken, instead of being sent down with them as a witness,—as should have been the case, had there existed any intention of bringing them to trial,—was sent off from the Rock depot to winter at English River, a distance, up the country, of upwards three thousand miles, in a contrary direction.

More stress is here laid on various circumstances that appear foreign to the relation of Mr. Frobisher's individual sufferings and deplorable fate than would be necessary in a mere narrative, but this is done because they all illustrate the malignant spirit that pervaded the perpetrators of the outrage under which that unfortunate gentleman suffered worse than death, death in all its bitterness, death preceded, as he himself well described it, by “ the last stage of wretchedness.”

Before commencing the narrative of his ultimate sufferings and calamitous fate, let me recapitulate the names and destinies

of all who were so arbitrarily and shamelessly seized upon at the Grand Rapid. They were :

John Duncan Campbell, Esq., N. W. Company Partner, imprisoned several months at the Bay, brought down to Canada in custody and there set at liberty.

Joseph Paul, Guide,	}	ditto
Pierre Paul, Engagé,		
Pierre Boucher, "		
Louis Majeau. "		

Angus Shaw,	}	Partners, imprisoned several months at the Bay, then sent to England, and there set at liberty.
John George MacTavish.		

Edward Cain, servant ; made to enter into the Hudson's Bay Company's service, which he left on the first opportunity.

Thomas Ogoniarto, Iroquois steersman, brought out by way of Lake Superior.

William MacIntosh, Partner, escaped at the imminent peril of his life.

Benjamin Frobisher, Esquire, Partner	}	Retained in confinement at York Factory, with what ultimate intention cannot be known.
Amable Turcotte, Steersman.		
Joseph Lepine, "		

Although, Mr. Frobisher's constitution was impaired and his intellects affected before the departure of his friends, it appears from the account given by the two Canadians, Turcotte and Lepine, who were left to share his confinement, that both his health and his head became much worse afterwards, and that nothing solaced his mind but the vague hopes of effecting his escape.

Fits of listlessness and sullen indifference would be succeeded by starts of passion and exclamations of despair. He would, night and day, pace his narrow apartment, throwing his arms about, then, clasping his hands, would bewail his hard fate, his deserted and hopeless condition.

His men, with the characteristic gaiety and carelessness of their nation and vocation, would beguile the time with a song, or by persuasion endeavour to dissipate his thoughts, begging him to do as they did, to have patience, and that time would be a cure to all, to which he would reply : *Je le voudrais bien, mes enfants, mais je ne suis pas capable. La tête me tourne, je mourrai ici si je ne m'échappe.* These men emphatically say that, had he passed the winter at the Bay, *il serait devenu tout-à-fait fou.*

Both in his ravings and in his quiet moments, he incessantly applied his hand to the side of his head where the fatal blow had fallen, and complained of that, saying that it would be his death, and he continued to be frequently seized with fits of dizziness from the same cause. Nothing could console or satisfy him but when some means were thought of, or plans devised, for facilitating his escape. To this, the two men were also nothing loth, and dreaded scarcely any thing more than to spend the winter in the dismal confinement in which they found themselves. Both of them were tall and strong beyond the usual standard and size of Canadian Voyageurs, of hardy habits and tried fidelity.

Poor Frobisher had long contemplated the chances of getting away, with their assistance, and exploring his dreary way through the winter wilderness of lakes and rivers, forests and mountains, ice and snow, which separated him from the nearest fort of the North-West Company, from the nearest place where he might expect to meet with friends, assistance and commiseration. This was a distance of nearly one thousand miles !

He calculated too much upon the consciousness of his own former strength of body, hardihood of constitution and innate resources, and allowed not the consideration of his present debilitated, reduced and afflicted state to be weighed into the balance against the dreadful extremities of fatigue and hunger he well knew he must encounter. His whole sollicitude was to extricate himself from the grasp of his oppressors.

The Hudson's Bay chief, Williams, being gone as before said, almost all the men being away to their respective departments, and the Company's schooner having sailed to winter at Churchill, they were much less narrowly watched than before and their sentinels were discontinued. Indeed, the approach of winter, the severity of which in those parts cannot be described to or conceived by the inhabitant of more genial climates, lulled all suspicion of their intention to escape, as every one but those who "groaned under oppressions iron fangs" would have considered such an attempt as one of insanity or desperation; and in full, it partook of both.

With regard to the preparations they made for the arduous undertaking they had in view, it seems that, in addition to his own observation during his conveyance to York Factory, Mr. Frobisher had procured some written instructions for finding the way with a rough sketch of the country through which he was to pass, and which were found in a torn and imperfect state with his body.

He had his watch, but no compass; they had, all three, pocket knives and tinder-boxes with flint and steel. He was very bare of clothes and, in this respect, his men were better off than himself; he had, however, a good three point blanket, and his men had also each one.

For some time back they had, in contemplation of such an expedition, economised as much as possible of the pemican and

meat that was served out to them, and had laid by all they could from their scanty allowance to form a stock for the journey and which, at the time of their departure, they calculated would be enough to last them all three for about a fortnight.

They had also one whole dressed original skin and some pieces to supply them with shoes and mocassins, together with two or three spare pairs of mocassins and leather mittens, which they did not anticipate would become part of their stock of eatables.

They procured an old net, which was carefully secured, being always wrapped round the body of one of them, and which was the greatest treasure, next to a gun, they could possess. A canoe was a *desideratum* they could more easily supply, and had they not succeeded in getting one on the spot, they had found a plan of proceeding as far as Rock House on foot—one hundred and fifty miles—and there, by taking to the woods on the opposite or north bank, to make observations, undiscovered, where and how the canoes lay, and then cross over in the night by swimming and creeping on all fours through the shallow, and so secure a canoe.

A small canoe, however, lay neglected on the beach by the sea side, which they decided to take, and, having got together their few necessaries, their net and their small stock of provisions, they stole out of their place of confinement in the night of the 30th of September.

Mr. Frobisher carried what they had to the river side and the two men silently got the canoe over a neck of land into the river. Committing themselves to the mercy of Providence, assisted by a night tide for about ten miles, they embarked with lighter hearts and more cheerful anticipations of the future than they had for a long time before indulged in.

Though Mr. Frobisher's wasted frame still exhibited the sad effects of his sufferings, no sooner did he find himself liberated

from the hard oppression under which he had groaned, than his spirits and mental energy returned and in a measure supported him for a considerable time, and although he still constantly complained of his head, his healthy appearance had partially returned, and the buoyant state of his mind, from the hopes and expectations of ultimate escape, enabled him to encounter the difficulties that presented themselves, even at the outset of their labours, with comparative and unlooked for vivacity and fortitude.

He could soon occasionally join his men in the chorus of some *voyageurs* boat songs, with which they bequiled the tediousness of the voyage and the labours of the paddle.

It was not, however, during the few first days, nor until they were passed Rock House that they durst make any noise. There was not indeed much risk of their meeting with interruption, yet, the meeting with a straggling hunter, or a fishing party might have been as fatal to the success of the escape as the encounter of an entire brigade.

Rock House they passed in the night, silently creeping up the opposite side of the stream, in which they were favoured by the uninterrupted noise of the successive rapids in that part of the *Rivière du Diable*, called "Hill River" by the Hudson Bay people.

Their labour was excessively hard, up the seven or eight strong rapids immediately above the Rock House, at most of which they were obliged to cross the portages with their canoe.

They had understood that the next establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company, which was Logan's, at Swampy Lake, had been abandoned, and they now therefore pursued their way more fearlessly, and generally, when encamped at night, set their nets and caught some fish.

By "encamped" the reader must not understand that they had any tent, or even the advantage of a tarpawling or sail to serve as a substitute, but "encampment" is the *voyageurs* term for their place of nightly rest, whatever their accommodation may be. In the present instance, a small clear place on a rising ground was found, a few branches of trees set up to windward, a fire was lit, their scanty meal taken, and each man layed down wrapped up in his blanket, exposed to whatever weather the night brought. In that latitude and season of the year, (October,) it is boisterous and severe, heavy storms of rain, sleet and hail being followed by intense frosts and frequent snow-storms.

A soldier's camp bed of straw under his sorry canvas tent would have afforded a luxurious shelter in comparison to their hard and unsheltered quarters. They were, however, running from slavery and had, though a distant, yet a cheering prospect of deliverance, motives to endure privations and miseries untold and unknown to all but those who have suffered them.

Looking at the mutilated and half effaced scraps that remain of Mr. Frobisher's pencil journal it becomes partially legible on:

"October, 13th. Encamped at the entrance of Knee Lake"; (a lake about sixty miles long and full of islands.) "Set our net; " took fine fish.

"October, 14th.—Degraded (1) at the Old House; " ("Degraded" is a *voyageurs* term for being prevented from proceeding by the weather; being weatherbound.) This was an abandoned post of the Hudson's Bay Company on the North-West shore of Knee Lake) " took 6 fish.

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(1) The French Canadians, to this day, make use of the word "*dégradé*" whenever stopped on their journey by unfavorable weather. The word is unknown in that sense in France.



" October, 15th.—Marched all day ; strong head gale ; set our  
" nets ; took 35 fish.

" Oct. 16th.—We had a fine day. Encamped at the end of  
" Knee Lake.....

" Oct. 17th.—We marched all day.....found.....  
" the fort this day.....G.....

" .....Lake.

" Oct. 18th.—We were obliged to remain all day in our  
" encampment to pass.....fort.....night. We have  
" strong assurance that our remaining.....will be successful  
" and at.....net gives a good deal of fish. Passed the  
" fort in the night, undiscovered, encamped.....in the lake."  
The fort they passed here was Oxford house, on the east side of  
Mid-Lake, so called from being about mid-way between York  
Factory and Lake Winipic. It is about twelve leagues long,  
full of islands, and the passage very intricate.

" Oct. 19th.—.....until.....the risk of the day. We  
" have not yet lost much.....by missing our road..... took  
" 7 carp, 3 small pikes.

" Oct. 20th.—We were much at a loss for the road and saw a  
" small canoe, and when we came alongside, we were surprised  
" to find it was a half breed in the Hudson's Bay employ. This  
" will.".....

" Many lines are here obliterated.

Here it was that the more formidable obstructions in their  
progress occurred. They were frequently at a loss to find the  
best or, indeed, the only proper route. In the lower parts of  
the river and in the lakes, poles, which they call may-poles,  
were erected on most of the conspicuous points, some on the  
right and some on the left hand of the direct route, but all right  
upon the route. When these fail, it is necessary to look out

for portage paths, beaver dams, vestiges of encampment or other signs of canoes having passed, and all these are necessarily made more difficult to discover or trace when the snow falls and covers the ground.

The increasing severity of the weather not only bore hard upon them, scantily as they were provided against it, but the accumulation of the ice in the rivers threatened and soon effected the stoppage of their progress by water.....

The next legible place in the journal runs thus: "River before they were expended: took 18 fish....."

"Oct. 21th.—We encamped in the....."  
"..... walking.

"Oct. 23rd.—We had a heavy fall of snow; took 20 white fish, slept on the ice; attempted to break it, but it's too strong."

After stopping nearly two days, still hoping to get on in their canoe, it being yet an early period for the rivers to be entirely frozen up, they were forced to give up that hope and to prosecute their dreary journey on foot.

Having hitherto taken fish along their route, they had not entirely consumed their pemican, of this they had at this time about two pounds left and about two handfuls of meal.

In addition to his disease and debility, Mr. Frobisher had now got swelled legs. Walking across the numerous portages had been all along a painful exertion to him, and when under the necessity of traversing on foot so many hundred miles as yet remained to pass before he could expect to obtain relief, it is wonderful that he resisted as he did.

In the course of their journey the weather appears to have been peculiarly against them. Before they could expect it, according to the usual course of the season, they were prevented from proceeding by water, by severity of the frost, and in less than a

week after, when the frost would have been most acceptable, the weather broke and the thaws and floods impeded and retarded their progress on foot nearly as much as the ice did when in a canoe.

"Oct. 24th.—Clear weather, very cold, the ice not breakable. Threw away one canoe, set our net, took two white fish."

Nets are set under the ice by making two holes at a distance from each other equal to the length of the net, and passing it from one to the other by means of poles.

The white fish mentioned in this journal are a species that abounds in most of the lakes and rivers in that country. They are excellent eating and weigh about half a pound each. It is to be observed that though, at the time the fishing of these unfortunate travellers was not scanty, they could not lay up a stock from any surplus they might have as they had neither salt nor any other means of preserving it; besides, in their emaciated and wasted state, it was next to impossible to carry anything in addition to what they had.

"Oct. 25.—We marched all day, passed many portages in the woods along the rapids, the river we find long: encamped on a lake." This was Wepenapoc Lake, which is about 18 miles long. "Set our net, took three carps. We found vestiges of Indians here.

"Oct. 26th. - We followed the Indians' track all day. Passed Hill Portage and one large lake; encamped on the river.

"Oct. 27th.—We had snow last night; luckily the first pipe from our encampment."—The Canadian *voyageurs* often designate distances by pipes, that is, the distance intervening before they stop to light a fresh pipe. This is more or less and may be from one to three hours—"we found two Indians; a large camp along a rapid. They had abundance of fish. Here I am in hopes to finding a guide to take me to Pike River.

" Oct. 28th.—We left the Indians; I got a guide to conduct us to Pike River by a shorter route, but, to our great disappointment, a large lake we had to pass was open water. This obliged us to strike off through the woods to the canoe road.

" Oct. 29th.—We fell on the canoe road; advanced by a small river in which the current runs to Pike River. Our guide left us; gave us a good chart of the road to Lake Winipic, which we can reach from this in six small days, but we shall lose time in Pike River."—The Indians draw charts of their routes on pieces of bark or on dressed skins. This Indian chart was not found upon Mr. Frobisher. Small days mean short days journeys.—".....as we..... road for the Winipic.

" Oct. 30th.—We marched hard all day, the weather too mild; encamped ab.....hand of the last lake.

" Oct. 31st.—We reached Pike River; the thaw so great, we could not advance.

" Nov. 1st.—We passed the portage, the river being nearly open, we however got in the canoe road above it. We only took one pike in our net. Encamped near our last encampment when we came from Lake Winipic. We set the net.

" Nov. 2nd.—The thaw great; remained, the ice being weak; took 16 white fish in our net; mended it and set about drying fish.

" Nov. 3rd.—We had snow and rain; the river nearly open. Took 14 white fish. We are obliged to go along the beach, so that we cannot advance. This thaw retards us much, which is really vexing, being so near Lake Winnipic.

" Nov. 4th.—We took only eight white fish; set off from our camp; the wind north and cold; made a good day; encamped near the Old House.

" Nov. 5th.—We passed the Old House .....

".....within two leagues of Norway  
" House.

" Nov. 6th.—..... attempting.....

".....the ice not strong enough. Set our net.

" Nov. 7th.—Took twelve white fish; set off from our encampment. Shall be able to cross to the other side of the lake; encamped about.....A..... the ice will, I hope, be bearable to cross to-morrow, when we shall at last reach Lake Winipic.

After this, they did not take a single fish whilst Mr. Frobisher was in existence. His remaining strength was rapidly going; his feet, particularly the left, from the European shoes he wore being too tight, became so lacerated and swollen, that it was with difficulty he could walk at all, and the men were often obliged to support him over dangerous places.

Norway House, an establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company already mentioned, at the north of Lake Winipic, was not far distant, and Turcotte and Lepine, seeing the little prospect there was of Mr. Frobisher overcoming the hardships that still remained to be encountered—they had travelled full five hundred miles and had yet about four hundred to go (1)—and surviving these accumulated hardships, proposed to him to repair to that post and give himself up again.

This, however, he determinately refused to do; his horror was so great at the idea of falling again into the remorseless hands of the ruffians by whom he had been so grossly ill treated, that he preferred braving death in its most appalling shape, a death of starvation, cold and fatigue. "*Non, mes enfants,*" said

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(1) The distance from Fork Factory to Cumberland House is much shorter, but it was probably much lengthened by the sinuosities of the route they had to follow on the canoe road.

he, "*je mourrai plutôt en chemin que de me rendre de nouveau à ces bourreaux.*"

They, therefore, encouraged each other to persevere, and though they were speedily reduced to have recourse to what articles of leather they had to supply the cravings of hunger, they floundered on as well as they were able.

The last entries in Mr. Frobisher's journal are thus :

"Nov. 8th.—We at last crossed....."

"Nov. 9th.—Made a good day on the lake.

"Nov. 10th.—Encamped at the Portage.

"Nov. 12th.—Encamped.

Here all his forces seem to have been exhausted, and though for eight days longer he kept journeying on through the woods, morasses and desolate places of the wilderness, he was scarcely conscious of his own existence. His left foot became worse, the flesh was entirely torn off and the bones and sinews were exposed to view.

Every night, he lay down with a strong fever upon him and appeared not only exhausted, but besides himself, constantly too, did he complain of his head and of the fatal blow he had received, and to which he, throughout, attributed his inability to contend with the hardships and miseries which he otherwise thought himself able to overcome. His men have nevertheless expressed their astonishment at the extraordinary vigour with which he, by starts, exerted himself.

Frequently having to wade through water, ice, mire and snow up to their middles, Mr. Frobisher would sometimes lead the way when they themselves hesitated and shrunk from the exertions.

Their only food was at length their dressed original skin, which they cut and broiled at night, with the addition, some-

times but very seldom, of some *tripe de roche*, the Iceland moss of the druggist, which they gathered from the rocks.

One day, they found hanging on the branch of a tree, and left there by some Indians—as is often done for signals to their friends or for other purposes—a strip of undressed buffaloe skin, between two and three feet long and two inches wide. This was a great treat, being far better and more digestible than the dressed leather they had lately lived on. They broiled part of it the same night and Mr. Frobisher partook of it with comparatively much relish.

On the 19th of November, when they had reached the border of Bourbon Lake, or Cedar Lake, although within two days march of Moose Lake Fort, the North-West Company's establishment to which they had directed their weary steps, Mr. Frobisher sunk entirely under the wretchedness of his fate.

No longer able to walk, he had for some distance been carried by his men on their shoulders. But human nature could no longer endure this. Enfeebled themselves to excess, it would have been certain destruction to all, either to attempt to carry him further, or to remain there without food or assistance and with not the slightest chance of procuring them.

During the greatest part of this day, Mr. Frobisher lay in a state of seeming insensibility and stupefaction. The men remained with him, still hoping he would recover. Towards evening he suddenly rose up, and regaining his scattered senses, considered what was best to be done.

They lay that night on a rocky piece of ground, clear from snow, and after holding a consultation, it was agreed that the two men would leave Mr. Frobisher there, make the best of their way to Moose Lake and send people to his relief. This plan was executed next morning.

They left him under the shelter of a screen of pine branches, wrapped up in a blanket, with a good fire near him, abundance of fire wood collected within his reach and water in a hollow part of the rock. What was left of the dried skin—a piece about twelve inches in length—they broiled for him on the coals before they went.

In their relation of these affecting incidents, when asked whether that was the only article of food left with Mr. Frobisher, they answered: No, that they also left him a pair of leather mittens and his own European leather shoes, and that all the means of subsistence they took for themselves were a pair of leather mocassins each!

.....

.....

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When the men left him, he gave them a note in pencil directed to the acting person at Moose Lake for the North-West Company in these words:

“ L’Epine and Turcotte will inform you the deplorable state  
“ they leave me here in Rabbit Point, at *Lac Bourbon*. Should  
“ my men arrive safe, for God’s sake lose not a moment to send  
“ men, dogs and provisions before me to relieve me from the  
“ last stages of wretchedness.

BENJ. FROBISHER.

Nov. 20th.

He told them to be of good cheer and make haste, and then bidding them farewell, turned round in his blanket as if to take repose.

The winter road through the woods from Rabbit Point to Moose Lake, had the men been acquainted with it, would have brought them to the post in two days, but they did not know it, and were afraid of running the risk of losing themselves.



With the summer road they were acquainted and that, therefore, they followed.

Their exhaustion was so great from want of nourishment and fatigue that it was only on the 24th they got to Moose Lake. They eat their moosassins on the road and had once got three small fish, about six inches long, in Lake Bourbon, and this was all the food they had for four days. Their famished and utterly wretched appearance told too well what they had suffered.

They were, of course, unable to return with the men whom Mr. Nelson, the gentleman who was in charge of the post for the North-West Company, sent out, without delay, to relieve Mr. Frobisher.

The spot was, however, easily found, and on the 27th of November the dead body of Mr. Frobisher was discovered in the same place where he had been left by Turcotte and Lépine. It appeared that he had consumed the piece of skin and had likewise eaten the heel of one of his shoes.

His body was found lying across the place where the fire had been, and the lower parts from the hips to the midlegs was burnt and partially consumed. His left hand grasped a stick with which it appeared as if he had been stirring the fire, or raking it nearer to warm himself. It is probable that in doing so, and in leaning over for that purpose, he had been attacked by the same giddiness and dizziness which had before affected his head, and had fallen in the fire.

The season did not permit of his interment; all was frozen stiff and hard, and neither could a grave be dug nor the body straightened. His obsequies were therefore left to be performed in the spring.

Early in the next season,—this year 1820,—when the North-West canoes came out, Turcotte and Lépine, the survivors, were

with them. The whole brigade repaired to the spot, found the corpse in the same position, and making as good a coffin as the circumstances would permit, interred the remains of Mr. Frobisher in a grave dug on the spot where he came to his untimely and wretched end.

Thus perished miserably a gentleman who was highly esteemed by all who knew him, an excellent master, beloved and respected by his friends and servants, and a most useful member of the society of which he was a partner.

Mr. Frobisher was a native of York in England and was in his            year.

The following letter which passed between Mr. Connelly—the gentleman who was, on behalf of the N. W. Co, at the head of the Department in which the catastrophe occurred—and Mr. Williams will close this narrative. They are both dated “Cumberland House,” which arises from the fact that both the N. W. Co and the H. B. Co. have establishments close to each other, and to which the same name was given. (1)

.....

Cumberland House, Dec. 24th.

Sir

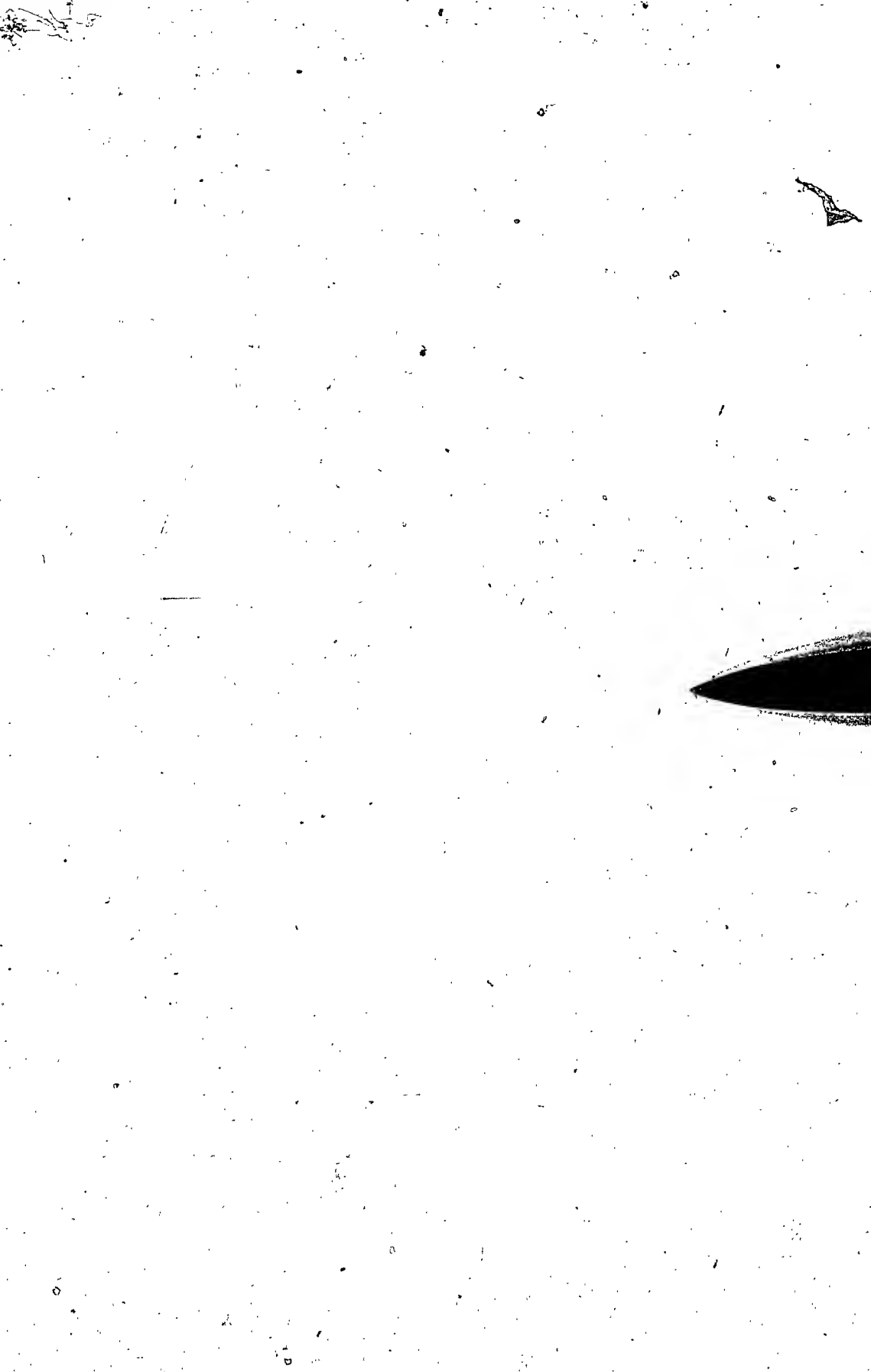
I presume that you are acquainted with Mr. Frobisher's departure from York Fort. The sequel of his undertaking I think fit to relate to you, that you may not be misrepresented and that you may prepare a defence of the proceedings which will now become a matter of interest, not only to his connexions, but to the people of Great Britain.

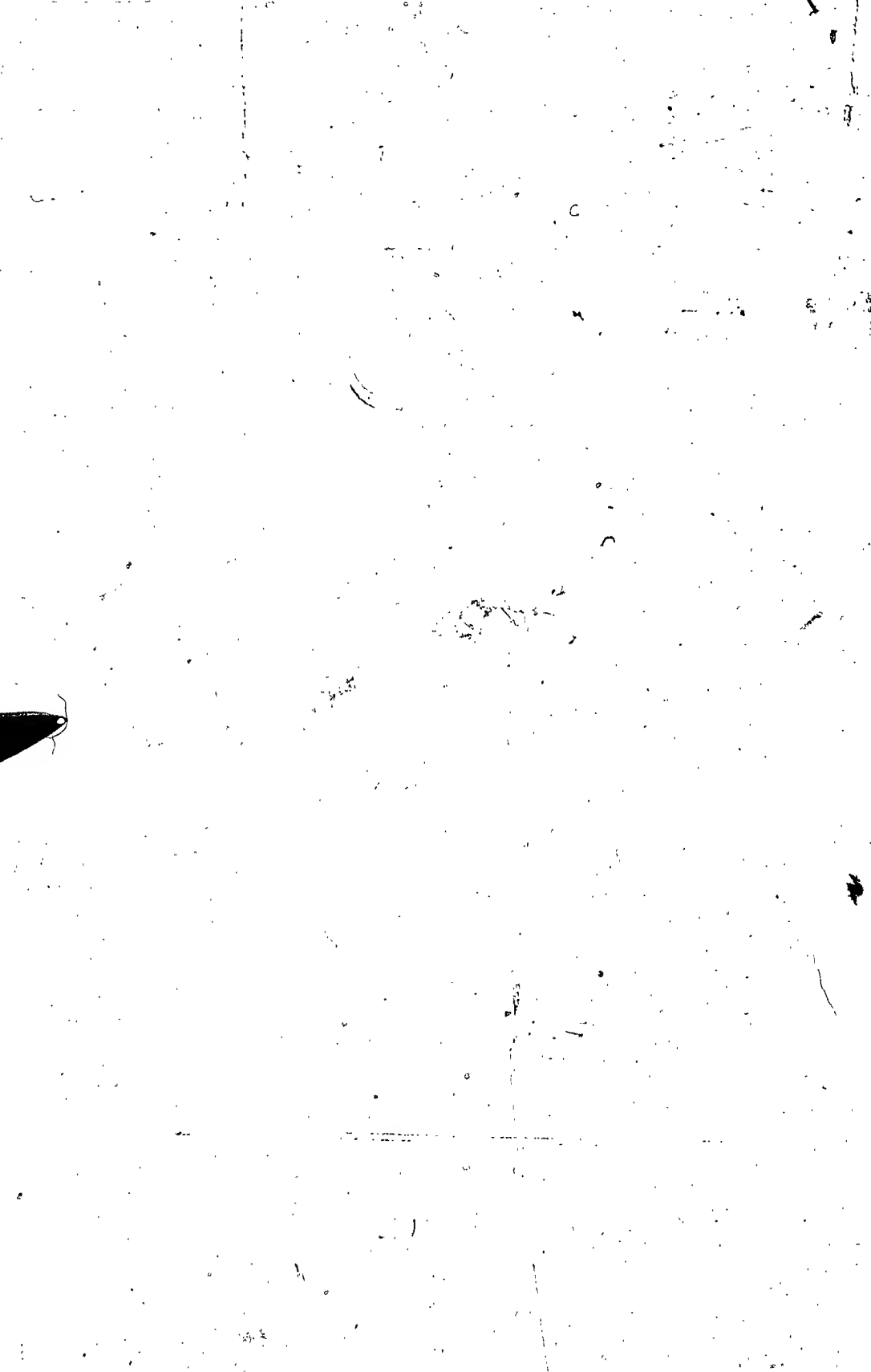
Copy of part only of one of these letters has been found in a revised copy of this “Narrative.”

He was left in Cedar Lake by his companions to procure assistance for him. He was unable to proceed any further through sickness—the consequence of severe blows he received on the 18th of June last,—and extreme fatigue. Immediately, a conveyance for his transportation to Moose Lake was sent, but what remained of this unfortunate gentleman was found miserably burnt near the fire which had been made for him. He was probably suffocated from his inability to move, or perhaps driven to this deed by the extremity of hunger. It is a man beloved by those who knew him, of family and of fortune, who has perished in this shocking manner.

Your conscience, no doubt, acquits you of being the instrumental cause of so horrible a misfortune, but, Sir, I would rather be where Mr. Frobisher is than be Governor Williams !

It is in vain to urge that Mr. Frobisher brought that disaster upon himself by leaving York Factory ; he could not have escaped from York Factory if you had not detained him there, with what justice we have yet to learn. But I consign this question.....





MR. DUNCAN CAMERON

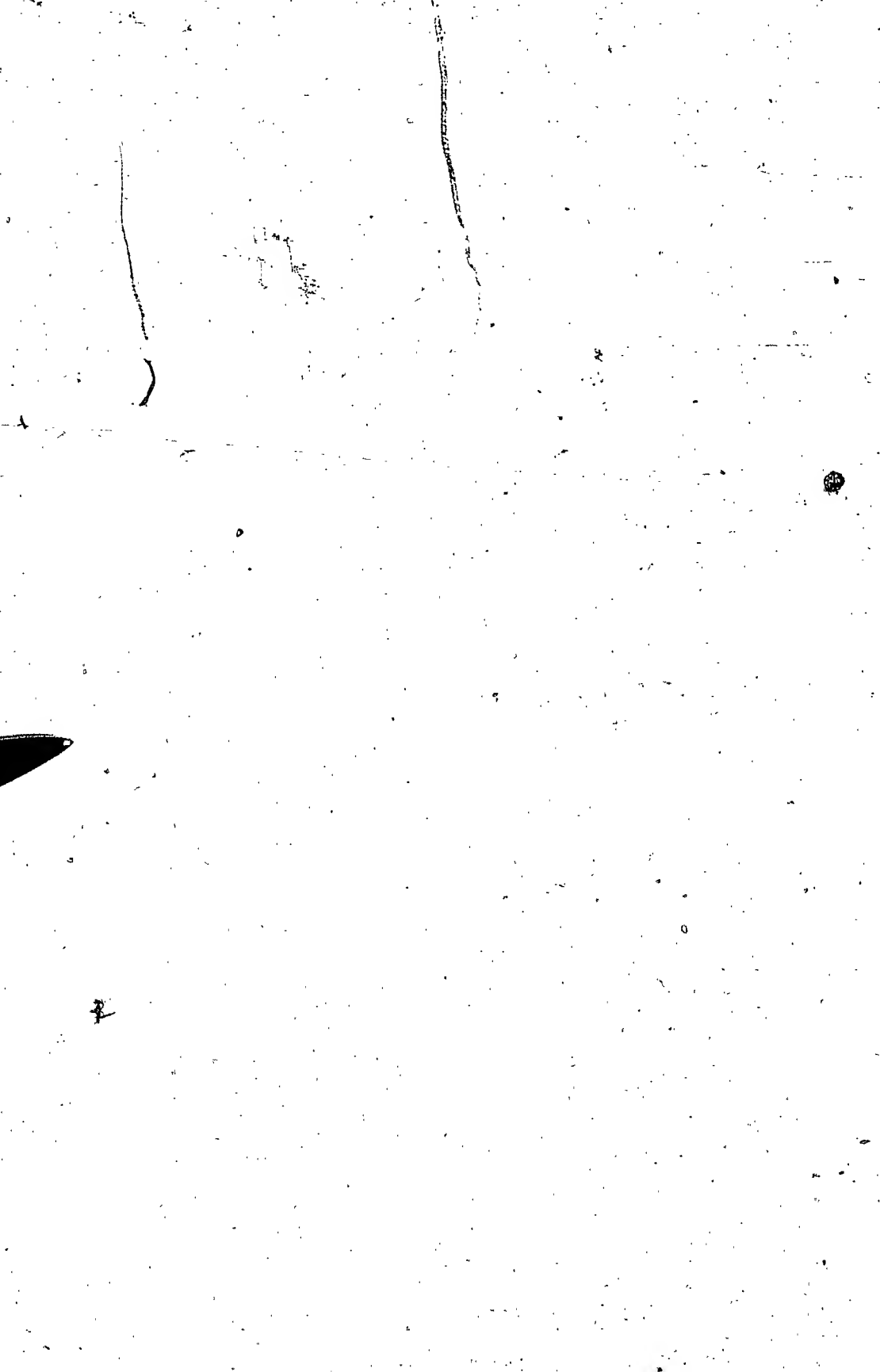
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THE

NIPIGON COUNTRY

1804.

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL.



MR. DUNCAN CAMERON.

Mr. Duncan Cameron was the son of a United Empire Loyalist who had emigrated from Scotland and settled at Schenectady on the Mohawk. At the declaration of Independence, Mr. Cameron, unwilling to renounce his allegiance to the British Crown, left for Canada with all his family, and after six weeks of fatigues and sufferings,—“sufferings, hardships, exposures and privations more severe than anything narrated of the Pilgrim and Puritan Fathers of New-England in their voyages from England to Massachusetts Bay” (1)—he succeeded in reaching his new home, on the Canadian shores of the St-Lawrence.

The North-West fur trade was at that time about being revived. The story of the immense success obtained by the Henrys, the Currys, the Frobishers, the Ponds had given a strange impulse to the trade, and all minds were fast being turned towards the North-West. Young Cameron, believing, like most young men of his

(1) Ryerson, “The Loyalists of America and their times. Vol. II, p. 189. 189-207.



age, nationality and circumstances, that his chances of acquiring an easy and rapid fortune lay there, sought for an engagement under an able and experienced trader, whom he found in a Mr. Shaw who had for many years traded in the Nipigon, and the father of Mr. Angus Shaw, several times mentioned in these documents.

In 1786, Mr. Duncan Cameron entered the North-West Company as a clerk, and was, soon afterwards, placed at the head of the Company's affairs in the Nipigon district, one of their most extensive departments, one very difficult of access and where a keen opposition had to be met, not only from the Hudson Bay Company, but also from the many independent traders who still held their own around the shores of Lake Superior.

His administration of that district nevertheless proved a success, but the labours, the hardships and fatigues he had to undergo at times, considerably impaired his health. Had it not been for his desire to maintain the ground he had gained after several years of hard work, it is not probable that he would have undertaken the trading expedition, the journal of which is now given.

The following extract from a letter he addressed from Kaministiquia to Mr. Alexander Fraser on the 7th of August, 1803, is interesting as it shows to what measure of self sacrifice the Old North Westers were ready to submit when the interests of the Company required it.

“ I was very ill a part of the winter, owing, I suppose, to the great hardships I had to endure last fall, going in by the extraordinary bad weather I met with, and being badly man'd; but I recovered, as you see, and arrived here the 9th July,—by the way of the Nipigon,—with tolerable returns and at that time in good health, which did not last long for, I can assure you it is with great difficulty I can hold my pen, but I must tell you that the X. Y. sends in to the Nipigon this year, therefore, should I leave my bones there, I shall go to winter.

“ I am obliged to take the old road again, as I find that my absence in the fall causes some disquiet to the Indians, who think that if I leave them they will soon be abandoned altogether, therefore I intend to convince them to the contrary,—besides it makes very little odds in the road, for I had about 200 leagues to go beyond River *au Tremble*, and fifty-three portages. . . . . ”

Mr. Cameron was not only an intelligent, hardy energetic and enterprising trader, but also a kind hearted and noble minded man. He stood high in the estimation of his co-partners, and when the complicated state of the affairs at Red River, in 1814, made it necessary for the North-West Company to choose a person to watch the proceedings of the Hudson Bay Company and Lord Selkirk, and resist their encroachments, he was selected by the Agents of the Company for this most difficult and ungrateful task.

This choice was, however, an unfortunate one for the peace of the country and more so even for Mr Cameron himself, who, with all the sterling qualities he possessed, lacked, nevertheless, that spirit of forbearance and self-control so essential in the trying circumstances in which he was placed, and in dealing with such determined and reckless opponents as those he had to contend against.

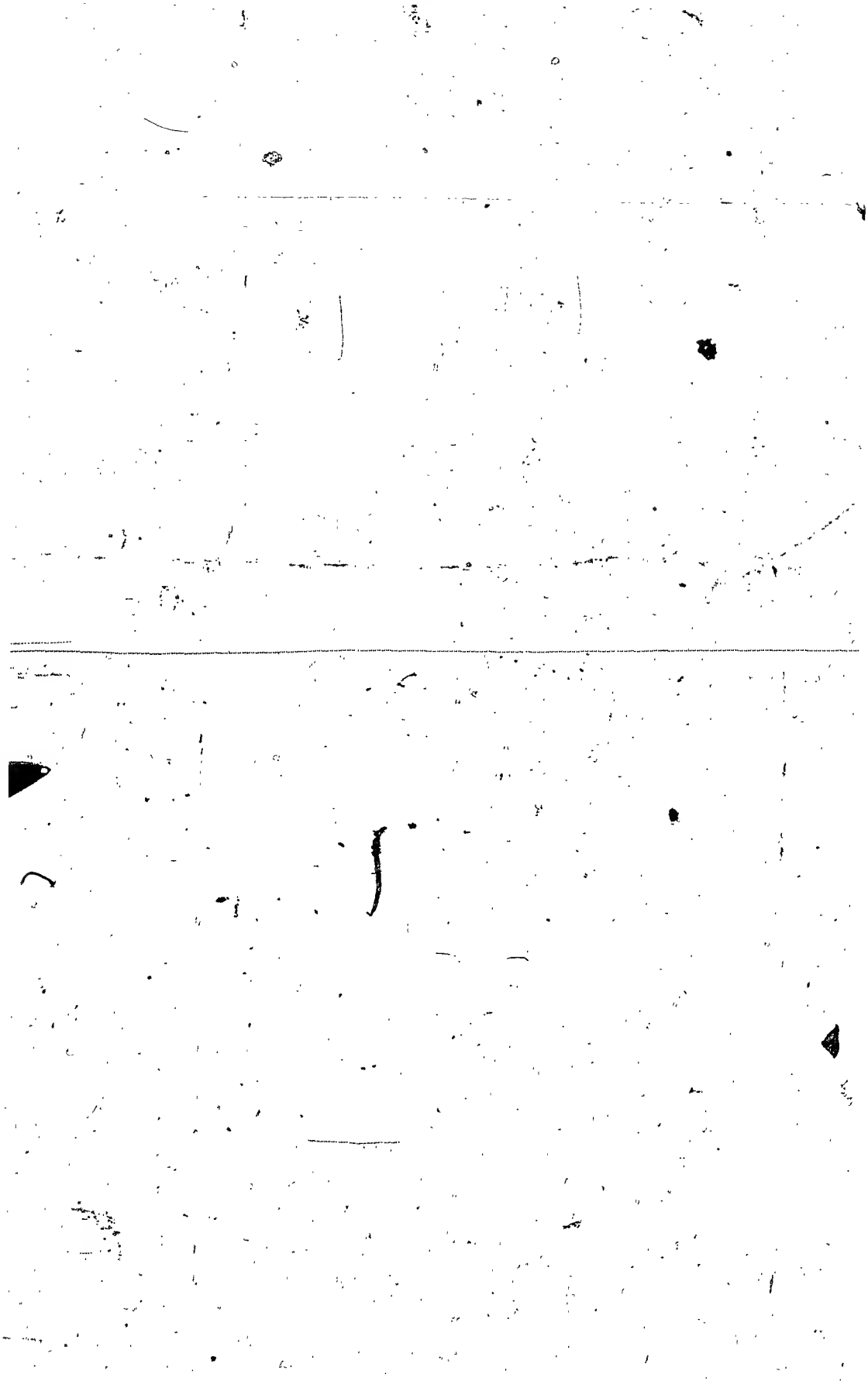
No man was more cordially hated by the officials of the Hudson Bay Company than Mr. Cameron, and no man detested them and Lord Selkirk more than he did. The consequences of this mutual dislike and of the overbearing dispositions of the contending parties are well known. They gradually led to violence, illegal arrests, confiscations, robbery, and culminated in the total destruction of Fort Gibraltar, the Head quarters of the North-West Company, at the Forks of the Red River, and in the tragedy of the 19th of June, 1816, by which Governor Semple lost his life, Fort Douglas was destroyed, and Lord Selkirk's new colony once more dispersed.

Mr. Cameron's arrest at Fort Gibraltar,—where he and his clerks were taken by surprise,—the cowardly treatment to which he was personally subjected, his illegal detention for more than a year at York Factory, his forced voyage to England, are only episodes in the long series of crimes and odious abuses of the authority of law which were committed by both parties during the reckless contest in which the two rival com-

panies were engaged. For this high handed arrest and illegal detention, he obtained damages to the amount of three thousand pounds.

Mr. Cameron remained but a short time in England, where he was immediately set at liberty, without even being brought to trial, and on his return to Canada, he retired from the North-West Company and settled at Williamstown, in the County of Glengarry, where he lived a quiet life in the genial company of several other old North-Westerners who had made Glengarry their home. He represented that county in the House of Assembly of Upper Canada from 1820 to 1824.

One of Mr. Cameron's sons, Sir Roderick Cameron, is now living in New-York, and is engaged in the Australian trade.



# THE NIPIGON COUNTRY

## I.

Extent and nature of the country.—The climate.—Quadrupeds and birds.—How the country was peopled.—History of the fur trade.—Competition in trade with the Hudson Bay Company.

## II

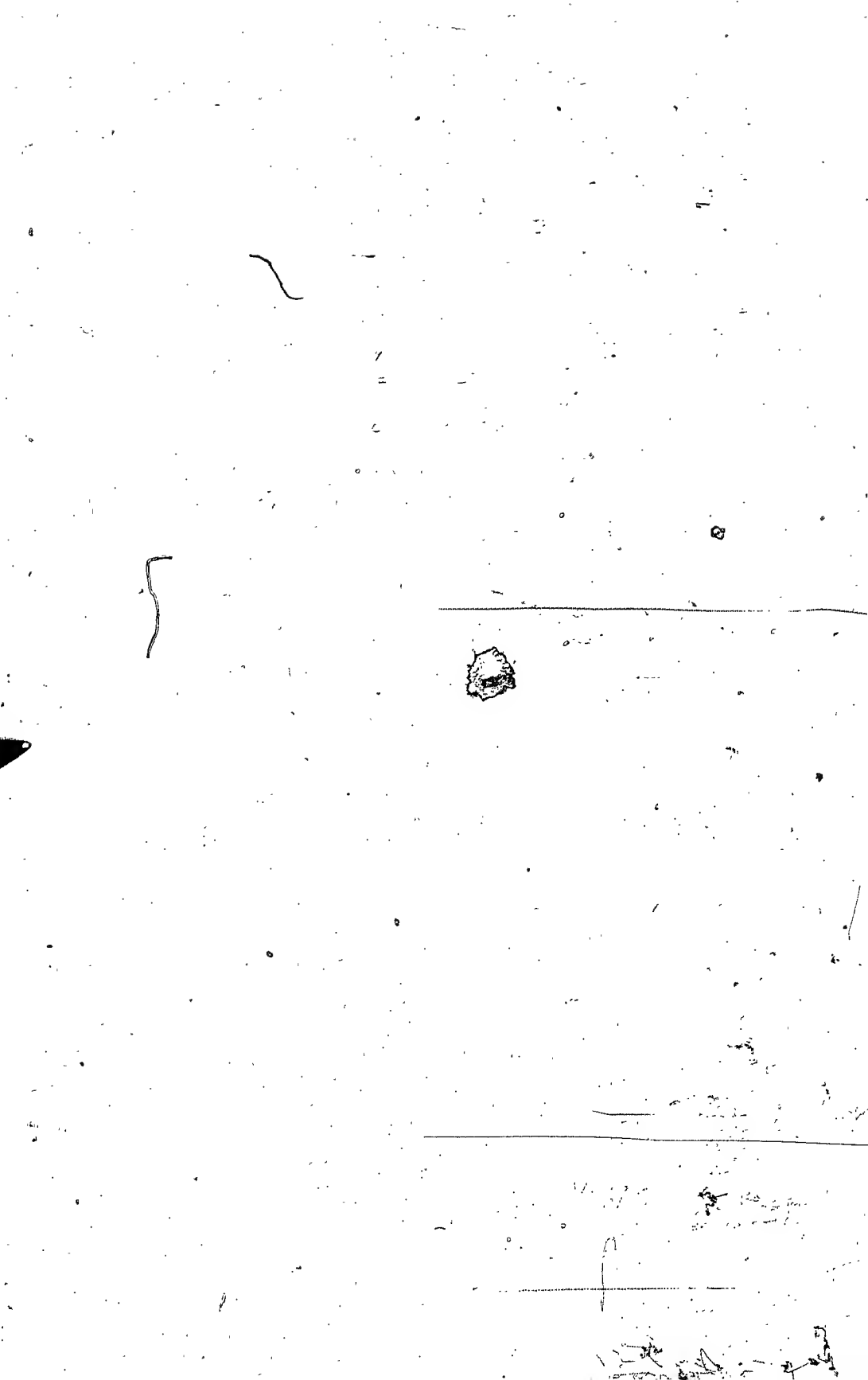
Population; *totems* or tribes.—Family ties and relationship.—The Natives; their qualities and failings.—Singular cases of cannibalism.—Marriages.—The feast of "Naming the Child."—Their ideas of rank and politeness.—Indian life.—Habitations.—Women's strength and labours.—Indian sagacity.

## III

Religion: future life.—Manhood fastings.—Conjurors.—The "Medecine Bag" and "Medecine Piece."—Credulity of women.—Care of the sick.—*Jongleurs*.—Early marriages.

## THE JOURNAL

Muddy lakes.—Discouragement of the men.—Conjurors.—Lac la Savanne.—Difficult navigation.—Osnaburgh Fort; cordial reception by Mr. Goodwin, Factor of the H. B. Co.—Love of liquor.—The haughty chief.—Trading chiefs.—Trading enterprises and conferences.—Indian and *Voyageur* pride.—The Natives.—Mr. Cameron leaves for the interior.—Difficult voyage and poor prospects.—He establishes a Fort.—The liquor trade.—Ruinous competition; its effect on the Natives.—Decline of the trade.—The Premium system.—Fear of starvation.—A fall fishery.



A

## SKETCH

OF THE

### CUSTOMS, MANNERS, WAY OF LIVING

OF THE NATIVES IN THE

#### BARREN COUNTRY ABOUT NIPIGON

I

Extent and nature of the Country.—The climate.—Quadrupeds and birds.—How the country was peopled.—History of the fur trade.—Competition with the Hudson Bay Company.

The Nipigon department takes its name from the lake called by the Indians *Aminipigon*, which the French, for brevity sake called *Nipigon*, and lies between the 49th and 57th degrees north latitude, and is bounded: on the south, by Lake Superior, on the south-west and west, by the north-west road from Lake Superior to the lower end of Lake Quinipique; on the north-west and north, by Hayes river and part of Hudson Bay; and on the north-east, by Hudson Bay. Its greatest length from



*Pierre Rouge*, at the entrance of Nipigon River; to the Lake of the Islands, on the Hayes river, is about three hundred and fifty leagues and its greatest breadth, from Trout Lake to Eagle Lake, is about one hundred and eighty leagues, but in most parts not over eighty leagues.

The two thirds at least of this country are nothing but rivers and lakes, some fifty leagues long; properly speaking, the whole country is nothing but water and islands; I have never travelled as yet above three leagues by land without finding either a river or a lake on my way.

The winters are very long and severe; some years it may be reckoned winter from the 15th of October to the latter end of May. In the year 1797, we were obliged to make use of our snow shoes till the 29th of May and the ice only disappeared on the 24th of June, but that was the latest spring we had since I came into the country. Every season here has its inconveniences; in winter we are tormented with the cold, and in summer much more so with the mosquitoes, sand flies, etc

Trees. See: Peter Grant, "The Sautouz Indians." (1)

Fishes. " " " " " " "

Animals. Dogs are the only domestic animals they have in this part of the country; they are very useful to them for hunting and some times even for food. The wild animals are the moose, reindeer, bear, wolf, wolverine, fishers, foxes of different colors, linx or cat, otter, marten, mink, weasel, pole cat, porcupine, rabbit, a sort of badger of the smallest kind, ground squirrel, brown squirrel and flying squirrel, a vast number of mice, on which

(1) In order to avoid repetitions, reference will often be asked, as in this case, to Mr. Peter Grant's Sketch of the Sautouz Indians, which is, in some instances, more complete.

the martens mostly subsist. The only amphibious animal in this country is the beaver.

The birds which reside here in the winter are the raven, Birds. several kinds of screech owls, whisky jacks, and a few other small birds. The birds of game are the pheasant, two kinds of grey partridges, the white partridge, an excellent and very pretty bird, a few magpies, with pretty feathers and a fine long tail. The first spring bird which makes its appearance here is the gray and white headed eagle; then come the crows, black birds and a variety of wild fowls, such as swans, bustards, geese, cranes, loons, gulls, and a great variety of ducks, &c. which make their appearance here in April; but they are only birds of passage and do not remain over twenty days on their way to the north side of Hudson's Bay, where they go to hatch and cast their quills and feathers. They begin to make their appearance again about the middle of September, on their way south. Some years there are many pigeons, which are very fat and palatable when they feed on berries, very plentiful here some years, such as: strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, gooseberries, sandberries, cranberries, small cherries and abundance of wild currants of different colours (1).

This part of the country has been peopled about one hundred and fifty years ago, partly from Lake Superior and partly from Hudson's Bay, as it would evidently appear from the language of the Natives, which is a mixture of the Ojiboiay, or Chippeway (2) as some call it, spoken at Lake Superior and the Cree or Masquigon spoken at Hudson's Bay. Origin of the population.

(1) For a classification of the quadrupeds, birds, fishes and plants of the North-West, see: Archbishop Taché's "*Esquisse sur le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique.*"

(2) *Sauteux.*

Every old man with whom I conversed, and from whom I made some enquiry on this subject, told me that his father or grand father was from either of these two places, and that the reason they came so far back could be accounted for in no other way than in the following: Population was then on the increase both in Hudson's Bay and on the shores of Lake Superior, and as Indians, who are obliged to rove from place to place for a good hunting ground, are equally at home in any place where they can find their living, they took to the interior of the country where they found innumerable rivers and lakes, swarming with a vast quantity of fish, beaver and otters. When one place was exhausted, they would retire farther and farther back till these two people, who are undoubtedly of the same origin, as well as all ancient inhabitants of North America, (except the Esquimaux, who by their long beards and filthy ways of living quite differ from all the Indians,) began to meet one another in the interior and to intermarry by which they, at length became one people.

History of  
the fur  
trade.

As there were no traders at that time anywhere in the interior, some used to go every spring to Lake Nipigon or *Monontague*, where the French had trading settlements; others went to Albany, Severn or York Fort, in Hudson's Bay. In the course of time, the population became more numerous and wanted traders to go farther inland. One Monsieur Clause, who was afterwards killed by the Indians at *Fond du Lac*, was the first who passed Lake Nipigon, in the year 1767, and got as far as *Nid du Corbeau*, which was then considered a great distance indeed. He and his men were almost starved to death and reduced to eat several packs of beaver to preserve their lives.

This was a poor encouragement to others; however, some years after, other traders came to *Lac la Savanne*, *Nid de Corbeau* and *Lac du Pichou*, where several men were starved to death at different times. In *Lac la Savanne*, no less than four out of eight

starved in one year. This gave the country such a bad name that men could not be had at any price to bring in goods for half the demand, and what little they did bring was of bad quality and the men themselves neither clever nor energetic and persevering, so that the Indians continued going down to Hudson's Bay, where they received much more attention and got better goods for their furs.

This state of things made the Natives despise the Canada traders, whom they considered as poor, pitiful (1) creatures who could neither supply themselves nor the Indians. They would take their goods on credit, pay what they pleased with the worst of their furs and carry all their fine and prime furs at Hudson's Bay, so that the trade had become a losing business, although the country was rich, and fortunes might have been made in it.

When I first came as clerk (2) in this country, in 1785, the whole Nipigon only produced 56 packs, although there was then no opposition either from Hudson's Bay or any where else, and although one third of what now forms the Lake Quinipique Department was then belonging to the Nipigon. The present returns are too well known to require mention. I could easily enlarge upon this subject and refute completely an opinion which formerly existed concerning my own management of that department, but I do not wish to do it, nor to appear in the least an egotist, especially as I believe the public are disabused on that subject, and I am happy to think all prejudice is done away.

The English, seeing the Indians come so far to trade with them while they had traders on their own lands, thought that by Hudson Bay Co's competition.

(1) Pitiful, *faire pitié*, is synonymous of poor, disappointed, starving. *Tu vas faire pitié* was, with the Indians, a threat of a grievous character.

(2) To Mr. Shaw, at that time an independent trader and the father of Mr. Angus Shaw, who became a partner and an Agent of North-West Co.

going into the interior, the Canadian trader would get little or no share of the trade. For this purpose, in the year 1786, they got up as far as Osnaburgh Lake where they built a fort. They had a good run of trade for a couple of years, which encouraged them to penetrate still further until they at last came as far as Red River, but the more they made settlements, the less popular and the less respectable (1) they became with the Indians, who began to pay them frequent empty handed visits, expecting to be treated in the same manner as when they went once a year to Hudson's Bay with canoes loaded with furs. They soon found their mistake, and began to think as little of the English as they did, thirty years ago, of the Canadian traders, so that, at present, one may say that they are looked upon as "slaves" (2) and get but a very indifferent share of the trade, for which they pay very dear, whereas we are getting more and more respectable every year.

No one attempted to go beyond *Nid du Corbeau* and *Lac du Pichou* till the year 1793, when I sent one Mr. Turcot, with three well mounted canoes, to penetrate as far north as he possibly could, but they got no farther than Big Lake (3) and told in the spring that it was both needlèss and impossible to get any farther. I did not, however, take his word for it, but, in spite of all the orders I gave them, none of them got any farther till I came into this quarter myself, in the year 1796, when the English were again carrying all before them. Since that time I got above one hundred leagues farther than Big Lake and met with the York traders.

(1) The Indians, much like many modern civilized men, called "respectable," lavish or liberal traders, whom they consequently considered as rich.

(2) *Voyageur* and Indian expression which means: "poor, miserable, without influence."

(3) Probably, Lake Severn.—See the Journal; 6th of September.

It is true I had to go through small creeks and long portages which were, till then, reckoned impracticable, often at the risk of starving both myself and my men. My namesake, Mr. Dougal Cameron (1), who was always ready to undertake as well as to undergo any hardships for the interest of the concern, made two very narrow escapes, and saw himself reduced to eat the parchment out of his windows; but, thank God! we have all escaped as yet, and have been rewarded by tolerable good returns.

I am, however, sorry to remark that this part of the country is now very much impoverished since; beaver is getting very scarce, but I have nevertheless managed to keep up the average of returns by shifting from place to place every year and increasing the number of posts, which, of course, augmented the expenses and made the trade dearer, but that cannot be helped at present, and we must conform to circumstances and hope to see a reform soon.

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(3) Mr. John Dugald Cameron was, I believe, the brother of the Honorable Duncan Cameron, at one time Provincial Secretary of Upper Canada. He entered the service of the North-West Company about 1790, and passed most of his life in Nipigon district.

In 1843, he was still doing duty under the Hudson's Bay Company, and was then, with Mr. McLoughlin and Mr. Charles McKenzie, the last of the old North-Westers who had seen service with the Honorable Rodoric McKenzie.

On his return to Canada in 1814, Mr. Cameron settled at Crafton, near Cobourg, with his Indian wife, to whom he was ever as courteous as if she had been an educated woman. He died at Crafton, leaving a son, Mr. Ronald Cameron, whose daughter was married to a Mr. Clouston, of Winnipeg.

Populations: *totems* or tribes.—Family ties and relationship.—The Natives; their qualities and failings.—Singular cases of cannibalism.—Marriages.—The Feast of "Naming the Child."—Their ideas of rank and politeness.—Indian life.—Habitations. Women's strength and their labours.—Indian sagacity.

Popula-  
tion.

The number of souls inhabiting the Nipigon Department does not exceed 820, of which 238 are males from fifteen upwards. These are divided into the following *totems* or tribes from which they take their family names: the Moose, Reindeer, Bear, Pelican, Loon, Kingfisher, Eagle, Sturgeon, Pike, Sucker, Barbué tribes and a few of the Rattlesnake tribe.

Use of  
*totem*  
marks.

By these *totems* they are enabled to leave letters or marks on their way as they travel, by which any other of their acquaintances who may travel the same way afterwards can immediately tell who they are and which way they went. By these means, when they wish to meet, they are never at a loss to find each other; the traveller will take a piece of birch rind, and with coal or the point of a knife will design his totem, that of his wife and of any other person in the band, the number of males and females of such totems, designing each according to their importance. The wife never takes the husband's mark, but retains that of her family, and the children of both sexes take the father's mark.

They leave these marks fastened to a pole and pointed in the direction they are going; if in summer, they will leave a bunch of green leaves, which will, from their withered state, give a pretty good idea of the time they passed. If any of the family

died lately, he is represented without a head, or laying on the side.

They also write songs for one another by designing birds, animals or whatever is the subject of it, and these songs are immediately understood and sung by the people who see them, although they had never heard them sung by any one before.

All those who are of the same mark or *totem* consider themselves as relations, even if they or their forefathers never had any connexion with each other, or had seen one another before. When two strangers meet and find themselves to be of the same mark, they immediately begin to trace their genealogy, at which they even beat my countrymen, the Highlanders, and the one becomes the consin, the uncle or the grand father of the other, although the grand father may often be the youngest of the two. It is not an uncommon thing to hear an Indian speak of twelve grand fathers and as many grand mothers.

The children of two brothers or two sisters always style themselves brothers or sisters, and so will their children and children's down to the last generations; but the children of a brother and those of a sister do not, and it is lawful for them to marry together, but not for two of the same mark, although perhaps is in no other way connected. They do sometimes marry, but it is against the will of the parents, and they are greatly despised by the others for it. If a quarrel should happen between a *totem* or namesake of theirs and a cousin, nephew or nearest relative of another mark, they will side by their namesake, whom perhaps they never saw before.

.....(1) Their personal appearance.

They are in general very well featured, especially their women, some of whom would be real beauties if their complexion was

(1) See : Peter Grant, "The Sautec Indians."



fair, although it is generally more so than those inhabiting warmer climates. They all have excellent teeth and pretty black eyes, which they know very well how to humour in a languishing and engaging manner whenever they wish to please.

Their qualities and failings.

They are courageous and possess in the most eminent degree that force of mind and love of independence which are the chief virtues of man in his savage state. They are not so ignorant as some suppose them to be, but are, on the contrary, a very intelligent people, quick of comprehension, sudden in execution, subtle in business, very inventive and industrious, and they are certainly the most patient and persevering people on earth.

With all these good qualities, they have many bad ones which are indeed inseparable from their savage state. When sober, they are of very gentle and amiable disposition towards their friends, but as implacable in their enmity, their revenge being complete only by the entire destruction of those against whom they have a spite. They very seldom take that revenge when sober, as few people disguise their minds with more art than they do, but, when in the least-inebriate, all they have in their mind is revealed and the most bloody revenge taken.

Love of Liquor.

It is not from absolute sensuality, nor for the sole pleasure of drinking that the flavour of liquor creates such an irresistible craving for more; they merely seek in their orgies a state of oblivion, of stupefaction, and a kind of cessation of existence, which constitutes their greatest enjoyment. I have often seen them, when they could get no more liquor, boil tobacco and drink the juice of it to keep themselves in that state of intoxication.

The crimes, murders and folies they commit when inebriate are entirely attributed to liquor, so that, when mischievously inclined, they feign to be drunk, expecting that no one will lay

their crimes to their account when in that state. If you find fault with an Indian for any thing he has done when the least in liquor, his answer will invariably be that he remembers nothing about it, but if you promise him any thing, he is sure to remember it, and ask you for it next day.

Indians are by nature very ungrateful; you may render them ever so many services and bestow ever so many favors on them, the last thing they do for you must be paid for. They are the greatest and most shameless beggars on earth; give them ever so much, they will still continue to ask for more until they receive a decided refusal. They are all very deceitful, and many of them great thieves: it is by no principle of honesty that they pay us their credits, but solely on account of the good reception they expect, and from fear of being refused when again in need. Being themselves unacquainted with honor and honesty, they are very distrustful of us, thinking us worse than themselves.

See: Peter Grant, "The Sautaux Indians."

Hospitality.

There are a great many cannibals among them, but most of them become so by necessity and starvation: fathers have eaten their children, husbands their wives, and wives their husbands when they happened to be the stronger. The weakest is always first sacrificed to this inhuman custom, and the strongest, most treacherous or cruel sometimes survives the last of a whole family.

Singular cases of cannibalism.

There are a few who are cannibals by inclination and go about by themselves hunting for Indians with as much industry as if they were hunting animals. The track of one of these is sufficient to make twenty families decamp with all the speed in their power. They look upon those who go about in this manner as invulnerable, so that attempting any resistance is useless,

and instead of destroying them whenever, by their number, they have a chance to do so, they make them presents of clothing and provisions, begging of them to spare their lives and allow them and their children to live, at the same time acknowledging their lives to be at his or her mercy, women being also addicted to this horrible manner of living.

A woman, some years ago, killed her husband from fear of being herself and children killed and eaten up by him. Her suspicions were aroused by seeing him drink a large quantity of raw blood, quite warm out of the body of an animal which had just been killed and opened. He appeared, as she said, quite wild and distracted in his looks, and she became so much frightened that she immediately split his head in two with an axe, before he had time to become quite invulnerable. She, moreover, said that it was high time to kill him as he often told her he dreamt he would become a "man eater". Although his body was quite warm when I opened him, his heart was already full of ice within him (?); and she was highly approved for what she did, even by his nearest relatives.

Women-  
hood.

When a young woman finds herself come to a state of maturity, she retires to conceal herself with as much care as a criminal would take to keep out of the reach of justice, and when her mother, or any other female relatives perceive her absence, she will inform her female neighbours, and all will begin to search for the missing one. They are sometimes three or four days without finding her; all of which she passes in abstinence, and I really believe she would rather die than show herself before being found out. When found, her mother will bring her some water, a small kettle, a birch rind dish and provisions, such as they have at the time. These provisions she must cook herself, and not presume to come into the wigwam, not touch any thing others are to eat, for fifteen and sometimes twenty

days. Nobody will join her during that time either in eating or drinking, nor even touch the kettle, dish, &c. she uses, as those articles are considered as poisonous to all but to herself! This kettle and dish she afterwards always keeps to herself for cooking and eating whenever her menses return, as they are otherwise unfit for use.

On every return of her illness, she retires from the wigwam, makes a shade for herself and there lives quite secluded for several days, and there is no fear that any of the young men will go near her, although, at either times, they ramble rather freely among the young women when the fires are out and the old people asleep.

The married women, when come to a certain age, have a little more indulgence when in this situation; they may sleep in the wigwam and even pass the whole day in it, but they must go and cook out, and must not dare touch the victuals of their husbands, nor eat, nor drink out of the same vessel.

When a young man wishes to take a wife, he employs his <sup>Marriage.</sup> father, or some other near relative, to go and give, the young woman's father, or some other near relative, a present of a gun or of any other valuable article he may have, and ask for the young woman. If the demand is agreeable, the present is accepted, but if they are sober at the time, the marriage is delayed until the next drunken frolic, when the father or brother of the young woman will take her by the hand and deliver her to the young man, without any further courtship or ceremony, and without even consulting in the least the inclination of the young woman, who perhaps has never spoken to the young man before.

The husband must then go and live with his father-in-law for a year at least, and give him all he hunts during that time, the father-in-law, however, finds him necessaries and clothing,

and if he is a good hunter, which is the best qualification he can have to ingratiate himself with the old people, he is maintained and treated the best of the whole family; the old man may then even give him one or two more of his daughters, which is the greatest compliment he can receive. The son-in-law, to show his gratitude, will remain with and maintain the father-in-law as long as he lives, while another does the same to his own father if he has been lucky enough to have daughters to give away.

Polygamy

Although a plurality of wives is allowed, they seldom take more than four, sometimes all sisters, who live together in great harmony, without the least jealousy towards each other; the first or favorite wife presides over the others.

If an Indian's wife dies, the father-in-law will immediately replace her with another of his daughters if he has any single; and when a woman loses her husband, one of his brothers, if he has any, is obliged to take her for wife and bring up his deceased brother's children the same as his own, and the first child he has by her always passes for the deceased husband's, even if it should be born three years after his death.

Fest of  
naming a  
child.

There are neither feasts nor wedding when they associate together, but when a child is to be baptized (1) they make a grand feast. The father appoints any one he chooses to stand as minister on this occasion. The ceremony is always delayed until a sufficient number of relatives or friends are assembled, the father then presents to the officiating minister a quantity of the choicest provisions the country and season can produce and religiously kept, perhaps, several months, for the circumstance.

(1) The French Canadians make use of the word *baptiser* whenever a name is to be given to anyone or anything; this accounts for the word "baptized" being used here.

These provisions are then immediately cooked, and the parson sends to invite every one in the place, except children. The invitation is made by presenting you with a quill, without saying a single word, and as Indians are never much encumbered with furniture for the reception of company, every one has to bring his dish or plate with him.

On entering the festive wigwam, you place your dish before you and return the quill to the person who presented it to you, and who immediately takes the dishes and divides the meat, or whatever it may be, according to the instructions of the parson who must eat none of it himself. During the feast, either before or after all the shares are made, the parson makes a long harangue which very few white men can thoroughly understand, however well versed in their ordinary conversation.

When this harangue, delivered with great energy and with all the oratorical power he can muster, is over, you are desired to do charity to the child and eat what is in your dish, because it is not yettable to eat for itself at this feast given in hopes it may live to partake of many feasts in future.

The parson sings and beats his drum during the whole meal, and then taking the child in his arms, he delivers an oration in which he wishes it all manner of happiness in the course of its life, and that it may live to wear gray hair and see its grand children. If the parson is an old man, he wishes the child to look at the sun at least as long as he did, and then sings another song in which he names it. The whole of the feast must be eaten up and sometimes lasts several hours, during which the parson must continually sing and beat the drum.

I was invited to several of their feasts on different occasions, and was invariably obliged to get help to finish my share, which was far above my appetite, especially as those Indians are the

dirtiest cooks and filthiest gluttons on earth. An Indian can eat as much as he pleases.

Other  
feasts.

They likewise make feasts from which boys, women and children are excluded; these they call their "Medecine" or conjuring feasts, at which they observe a number of ridiculous ceremonies, such as eating without a knife, striving who can finish his share first, dancing, walking so many times around the fire, retiring one by one in rotation, and several other foolish ceremonies too tedious to insert here. I have also often been invited to those grand feasts, and as it would be exceedingly insulting to refuse such an invitation, I always had to accept, but often thought the politeness bestowed on me amply repaid by the foolish capers I was obliged to cut to perform my share of the ceremony.

Rank and  
politeness.

See : Peter Grant, "The Sautaux Indians."

Reekoning  
of time.

They are very punctual to their rendez-vous, and I have often seen them arrive at the same day at my house, although they had not seen each other after having fixed the rendez-vous, some six months before. When the weather is clear they can tell the time of the night by the stars, and be guided by them better than we can.

Their conferences show them to be men of genius, and they have, in a high degree, the talent of natural eloquence.

Indian  
life.

All these Indians lead a wandering life, both winter and summer, and when they have killed or started all the moose and deer in the neighbourhood and dried or eaten up all their meat, they move to some other lake or river and look out for fresh tracks. They are remarkably good at tracking animals in all

seasons, and are seldom mistaken in judging how old the track is.

If they find nothing and can procure nets, they go to some fishing place, but since I have had the management of this department, I have seldom indulged them in that article, except old men and a few who have large families to support, as it only inclines them to indolence (1).

They dry all their meat and, sometimes, their fish, both to preserve it and to make it lighter of transport, as they have a great number of portages to carry across. The man carries his canoe, his gun and his medicine bag, the woman and children must carry all the rest of their lumber, which consists of kettles, axes, bales of dried meat, a drum or two, (which must always follow them, for it would be as difficult for an Indian to do without his drum as it would be to go without a gun,) bags wherein they have their knives, files, the bones and scrapes to dress their skins and leather, powder, shot and ball, tobacco, some cloth, their furs (if not hid somewhere,) and their birch Tent. Tents.  
Tent covering.

This covering is carried about with them both winter and summer, and is made of thin bark sewed together with a small root called *wattap*, till they are long enough to cover one side of the lodge or wigwam; consequently, when they arrive at the place where they intend to put up, they have but to cut a number of round poles or perches which they set up at about a foot and a half from each other at the lower end, and join them all at the top .....  
.....(2)

The men sit flat on the brush with knees drawn up close to their breast, the women, on their knees, with their legs folded in under them in lieu of stool.

(1) Refer to Mr. Cameron's journal.

(2) See Peter Grant, "The Sautaux Indians."



When several families intend to inhabit the same wigwam, they make it longer, with a door as above described at each end and two or three fires along the middle. Thirty people will live in one of these without being in the least crowded, whilst ten of us would hardly find room either to sit or lie down. The brush being laid and the poles set up, they put on the birch rind covering to within a foot from the top which always remains uncovered to let the smoke out.

An Indian will pass the coldest night in winter in these lodges without fire and with only an old blanket over him, when we would be freezing with two good blankets, besides our clothes.

Women's  
strength  
and in-  
hours.

Their women must, even in the severest weather, put up all these lodges and cut all the fire wood, as a man would consider himself degraded by doing that work, even if he had nothing to do all the time, but he will sit quietly smoking his pipe and hurrying them in the work. The man goes off early in the morning with his medicine bag, his gun, powder horn, shot pouch, his axe and ice chisel and leaves the women to fold their covering, pack up and haul along every thing they have. If they have daughters, they give each a load in proportion to their strength, and their youngest children they carry on their backs, tied up standing in a sort of cradle peculiar to the country and well wrapped up in moose or rabbit skins, with a blanket over the whole to screen them from the inclemency of the weather (1).

One would be astonished at the heavy loads these women can haul or carry, even when pregnant, and they will seldom miscarry, although you may see some of them going about blind

(1) See Peter Grant. "The Sautauc Indians," for the details of construction of these cradles.

drunk, tumbling among stumps and stones a few days previous to their delivery. Divine Providence has bestowed on these women a constitution suitable to the miserable life they lead...

.....

Immediately on being delivered, the greatest part are as able as ever to go about, even in the coldest and worst days of winter, and attend to her usual occupations. They are all good midwives for all they require, and many of them even lay in without any one to assist them.

The women are considered as mere slaves to their husbands, some of the bolder hussies nevertheless make themselves very independent and "wear the breeches," when the husband happens to be good natured. The women must dress the leather, make and mend the shoes of the whole family, skin and dress all their furs, mend their clothes, cook, put up and take down the lodge, cut and carry home all the fire wood, kindle the fire every morning, dry the men's shoes and rub them quite soft before they presume to present them to their husbands in the morning. They must set and attend the nets whenever they fish, and generally serve their husbands even if they were doing nothing at the time, and themselves very busy.

The men hunt, build canoes, (which the women sew and pitch,) snowshoe frames ready to net and which the women must finish; they make axehelves, paddles, *traines* for hauling in winter and every other crooked knife work. Still, they undergo as great hardships in winter as the women, for very often one man has to hunt and provide for fourteen or fifteen persons.

When travelling, the women set off on the man's track till they come to the place where he left his medicine bag; they here commence to work, shovel the snow down to the ground, and commence building in the usual manner. The man, who only stopped here to hang his medicine bag, goes off hunting or to work some beaver lodge, and will perhaps not return till late

at night, sometimes with a beaver or two, or whatever they chance to kill, and very often with nothing at all.

An Indian never loses his way in the woods, and will always find the place where he left his medicine bag, even if he had never been in the country before.

Mode of  
curing  
meat.

Whenever they kill a moose or a deer at a distance from the wigwam, they immediately skin and cut it up, lay the hide over the meat, and cover the whole with snow. This work takes them but a very short time, as they are all excellent carvers, and can cut up every joint of the largest animal with the worst knife which comes in their way. Next day, they will move towards the place where the animal lies, and the women, as soon as they have finished building, go for it, separate all the bones from the meat; they hang the latter over the fire to make it lighter for hauling and carrying, and they pound and boil down the bones to make what the white men erroneously call marrowfat.

Indians seldom remain above five days at the same place hunting all they can find in the vicinity, and then move on in search of more game. They are sometimes obliged to move every day and are very often several days without being able to kill any thing but a few rabbits or partridges, which are given to the children, while they go without any thing themselves. They seldom move more than three leagues at a time, on account of the children, who are not able to walk farther; but those between three and four years old are provided with small snow shoes, with which they come on behind, but must walk that distance.

Religion.—Future life.—Manhood fastings.—Conjurors.—The  
 “Medecine Bag” and “Medecine piece”; credulity of women.  
 —Care of the sick.—*Jongleurs*.—Early marriages.

These Indians have no religion, but acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator of all things; they neither adore, worship, nor fear him, as they think him to be all goodness, unconcerned about poor mortals and, of course, incapable of doing harm to any one. They suppose that each Element is ruled by particular gods, and to them and to the Evil Spirit they offer all their sacrifices.

They also believe in a future life, and that when their course in this shall be finished they shall join their departed friends in an Elysium, which they suppose to be an extensive plain or meadow in which they will find abundance of every thing they can desire.

They believe that their arms, instruments and utensils of all kinds will be transformed like themselves, and consequently, when an Indian dies, his drum, his pipe and smoking bag, an axe, a knife and a small kettle, some tobacco, his canoe and paddle, if in summer, and his snow-shoes in winter, are all laid in his grave that he may make use of their souls in the other world as he did of their bodies in this. The body of the deceased is painted and dressed in his best apparel, that he may make a decent appearance in entering the region of the dead.

Some years ago there was an Indian dying at my house from stabs he received from another Indian in a drunken frolic. A

gentleman, named Perreault, who was with me at that time, wished to baptize him when he was beyond recovery; he took great pains to explain to the Indian the benefit he would receive thereby, but the Indian very coolly answered that his father, brothers and several near relations were dead and that he would die in the same manner they did, that he might go and join them. When we were burying this same Indian a few days after, his mother addressed him a long speech, when in his grave, desiring him to continue his course straight and not to turn his head to look behind him in order to entice any other of the family to follow him before their time; that he would soon join his father and departed relations, whom he had not seen these many winters; that although he was pitiful for want of a smoking bag and wherewith to make a fire, yet to take courage and make all the haste he could to join his departed relations, and she continued conversing with him in this strain for a long time, as if he was still alive.

Manhood  
fastings.

When a young man arrives at the age of fourteen or fifteen, he imposes upon himself several days of the severest fasting, without even taking a drop of water till the cravings of hunger and thirst force him to break his fast. During all these fasts, which are several times renewed, he dresses in his best apparel, paints and ornaments his person with all the trinkets he can muster, such as rings, earbobs, earwheels, if he has any, if not, he ornaments his ears with dyed quills, swan's down, or a piece of old kettle, cut and polished, barley-corn or common bead necklaces; leggins or cloth boots and garters embellished with beads or porcupine quills, and moccasins on his feet; a piece of cloth from 9 inches to a foot wide around his middle, a cloth or molton *capot*, Canadian make, a cap or capuchon on his head and a blanket over the whole. This forms the full dress for the

vulgar, a chief's son gets a shirt and a hat from the trader he deals with.

During his abstinence, the young man retires from the wigwam in the evening and sleeps in a lonely place, the most elevated he can find in the neighbourhood, he sometimes erects a high stage or scaffold to sleep on, and whatever he happens to dream of during his abstinence becomes his belief and religion.

When the young man has done dreaming and fasting, he sets to work collecting ingredients for what he calls his Conjuring or Medicine Bag, which consist in different roots, barks, weeds, grasses, dyed quills, swan's down and small bits of wood made into knick-knacks of different shapes, according to what he dreamt. For each of these he composes a song, without which they would have no efficacy as a medicine.

He will then buy other roots or medicines from any other Indian who may have any to dispose of, and tell him that such a root, bark or leaf is good for curing such and such disease or pains, &c., &c., and the other will believe him as firm as we believe the Gospel. These medicines, however, are worthless unless accompanied with the song, which is sung in concert and paid very dear by the credulous Indian. I have often seen Indians make more in a few days out of their medicine bags and songs than they could do by their whole winter's hunt.

The young fellow is now admitted to all their conjuring feasts and ceremonies, and he, by degrees, acquires impudence enough to pretend that he knows more than those who instructed him; he is now a complete quack and an accomplished conjuror, who, by his knowledge, can cure all imaginable wounds or diseases, and becomes as secret and mysterious in his performances as ever a freemason was with his sublime mysteries.

Some of these conjurors will pretend that they can do super-Conjurors, natural wonders from what they dreamed, such as conjuring

a man to death, making him become blind, preventing him from succeeding in his undertakings, &c., &c., and are even impudent enough to pretend that they can command to the elements. Being once wind bound for several days, an Indian came to me and said that if I gave him as much liquor as would make him drunk, he would soon make the wind cease!!!

He who has the most impudence to impose upon the credulity of others, becomes the greatest and most dreaded conjuror among them. It is really unaccountable that, brought up together, and all about as enlightened or ignorant, they should make each other believe such nonsense. This superstitious fear explains why an Indian seldom imputes any unfortunate event to natural causes but invariably believes that another Indian whom he thinks has a spite against him, has been employing his art in conjuring to make him unhappy or unsuccessful; on the other hand, it makes them cautious in giving offence; Indians, in fact, seldom quarrel when sober, even if they happen to hate each other.

The Indian who had succeeded in acquiring the highest reputation as a conjuror is consulted like an oracle; if any children or young people fall dangerously ill, this great personage is desired to baptize them over again, which explains why Indians always have several names, and let him have ever so many, he is sure to have a nickname besides.

Whenever they intend going out to hunt the moose or the reindeer, they conjure and beat the drum a long time the night before, in hopes of charming any animal they may then find, and whatever good luck they have, is attributed to their drum and Medicine bag.

Credulity  
of women.

This conjuring or medicine bag is always carried by the men themselves, and the women are as much afraid to touch it as

they would be to touch a venomous snake or toad. These women are very credulous and their husbands make them believe whatever they please and, among other things, that by virtue of this bag they will know whenever their wives prove unfaithful to them or misbehave in anything. The consequence of this is that they are pretty chaste when sober, but when the least in liquor, they indulge themselves in such sport as comes in their way; when found out, they will say they remember nothing about it, and were senseless at the time, so that it was not they who misbehaved but the liquor. A woman, therefore, is never reckoned a prostitute for what she does when inebriate, provided she was never known to misbehave when sober, in which state she would not favor even her favorite gallant.

Every Indian has what they call his "medecine piece" of all the game he kills, such as the snout of the moose, the tongue and heart of the deer, the paws of the bear, and so on; this piece is always cooked by itself and no female, young or old, ever dare taste it, if she did, she would either die or turn as black as jet and lose all their nails. They sometimes pay us the great compliment of bringing us such a piece, but they will then inform us of its sacred quality, and tell us not to allow any women to touch it, as they would immediately die. I need not say that I have often seen several women living with the white men eat of those forbidden morsels without the least inconvenience. They likewise forbid us to give certain bones to our dogs, as it would prevent them from killing any more of that animal or make those animals become lean, and a thousand such nonsense too tedious to insert here.

Notwithstanding these superstitious ideas, the Indians think themselves the wisest happiest and the most independent of men; the greatest compliment they can bestow on a white man is to compare him to an Indian, either in sense or in beauty. To



disapprove their ideas, or argue with them on the absurdity of any of their tenets is only proving yourself a fool, for, if you had sense, you would allow them to be the first people on earth, both in wisdom and knowledge.

Care of the sick See : Peter Grant, "The Sautenz Indians."

*Jongleurs.* What their great Conjurors are most proud of, is when they happen to foretell future events. When they intend to attempt this great feat, they drive four pickets as far as they can in the ground and lash them well together with cross bars till they stand quite firm and solid, so as to form a square of three feet by four feet high : they then cover the whole with blankets or moose skins.

The would-be prophet enters it with only his rattle, and another person appointed by him sits on the outside to put questions and receive the answers. He then begins to make a terrible noise in a language the bystanders cannot understand, and himself neither, probably, and shakes his rattle, imitating the noise of different animals. This part of the performance being over, he answers the questions which may be put to him and which generally relate to the return or whereabouts of absent friends for whose safety they may have been uneasy. These *jongleurs*, as the French call them, are never at a loss with an answer, and will tell you with the greatest assurance or impudence what they are doing at the time. Their answers, some times, turn out to be true, but I have more often known them to tell nothing but untruths.

Some of the Canadians, who are almost as superstitious as the Indians themselves, will swear that they most distinctly heard two voices in the jonglery, alluding to the Devil, whom they suppose to be at the bottom of it ; I have often listened and never could hear the old gentlemen's voice.

One of these *jongleurs*, some years ago, laid a wager with me that I might tie him hand and feet with a cod line, and wrap him up with a net from head to foot in any manner I pleased, throw him in his jonglery with his rattle along side of him, and that he would untie himself. I did tie his hands behind his back as hard as I could and tied his legs in several places, then wrapped him up from head to foot in a net, so that he could not move one joint, and threw him into the jonglery with his rattle along side of him, and then covered the whole up.

He immediately began to mutter, changing tone every now and then; the voice grew louder and louder, but I could not understand a single word he said although I was then pretty well versed in their language. In about sixteen minutes he began to shake his rattle, which made me think his hands were free, and six minutes after, he threw out the net and desired me to examine it and say whether it was cut; finding the net all right I paid the wager. The men present of course swore the Devil untied him, as it was impossible he could do so himself, but I leave every one free of his own opinion, and will not pretend to say whether the old gentleman had a hand in it, or not.

The first thing a young man thinks of after he has been initiated in the art of conjuring, after he has become a perfect quack, is to find out a wife, as they all marry very young, especially the women, who are sometimes given away by the father at six or seven years of age. The husband, who is perhaps not above fifteen at the time, will then take her and bring her up himself in order to be sure of her virginity.

Early marriages.





# EXTRACTS

FROM THE

## JOURNAL OF D. CAMERON, Esq

NORTH-WEST COMPANY

WHILE IN THE

NIPIGON DEPARTMENT (1)

1804-1805

The guide started very early with his three canoes from Lake Nipigon, and at 10 o'clock, I sent off the two others, who had just time to get across, when it began to blow very fresh, so that I remained here all day, but I did not care much as I knew very well that we could soon overtake them.

We started early and made ten portages where we used to make but four and came through a small lake, not above two miles long, which gave the men four hours very hard labour

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(1) This journal was found in so damaged a condition that it required no little pains to put it in order. Several pages were lost and many others had to be entirely omitted. It was probably commenced at the end of July, when the "outfits" generally left the mouth of the Nipigon for the interior, and finished in the spring of 1805, when the "returns" were forwarded to the Grand Portage, which period formed the "trading season."

This journal has some interest, as it gives an idea of the general character of the country, north of Lake Nipigon, and also of the daily hardships which the traders had to suffer, of their mode of trading and dealing with the Indians.

paddling through mud or *vase*, with not above two inches of water over its surface, the mud rising over the *maitres* on each side with a shocking stench. This is only the beginning, as we have nothing but muddy lakes and portages from here to Osnaburgh, and God knows when we will get out of them, although the distance is not more than 25 leagues. We encamped at Portage *La Petite Chute*.

18th.  
Discouragement of  
the men.

Nothing but paddling through mud all day. We came up with two canoes that left..... we told them that they went very slowly, but they thought they were doing wonders and going exceedingly well, considering the hardships they met with, and began cursing themselves as blockheads for coming to this "infernal part of the country", as they called it, and blaming the person who first attempted this road, where not a drop of pure water could be had to quench their thirst.

I did not mind that much, as I knew it to be their habit whenever they met with any uncommon hardship, and as they were very good, able men, "proud North-West bucks", who never had been this way before, I did not wish to hurt their pride by representing to them at once how easy they were dispirited. I began to cheer them and told them to consider that this was not the only road in which people met with unusual hardship this year, on account of the lowness of the water; that it was the same all over the country.

They agreed with me that the lowness of the water would add greatly to the carrying in every part of the country, but that carrying from morning till night was nothing compared to paddling through mud, where they sometimes pulled with all their might for a quarter of an hour without being able to gain the length of the canoe. Though fully admitting that their present work was the most fatiguing a man could meet with, I told

them that the only remedy was perseverance and patience so as to get out of it the sooner. We made five portages, but did not travel more than 4 leagues and camped at *Grande Vase*, a portage 22 acres long.

We are obliged to haul the canoes through the mud with 19th. tracking lines whenever we can get near the shore. One may drive a pole twenty feet long down to the end in all these muddy lakes in which even the smallest dog cannot swim. We came over 3 portages, 2 of which were long ones, and encamped at *La pêche au Chavaudrevuil*.

It rained the whole day, though not so heavily as I wished, 20th. yet enough to force us to lay by; the men were so much fatigued that they slept the greater part of the day.


Clear weather; we started early and went all day paddling 21st. through the mud as usual, making two trips from one portage to the other and once, three. We often came up with the two ~~other canoes and would have passed them had I allowed my~~ men to do it as they are the smartest set of young men I ever had. We had no sight of our guide since he left the *Grand Rapide*, but I know by his *campements* that he is not far ahead. We made 5 portages where, in high water, there is only one. We made 6 leagues of our way, two of which were in the mud and encamped at *La Pêche au gros brochet*, in company with the two other canoes.

It rained all yesterday and the night before, but not enough 23rd. to raise the water much. This morning, we carried on slowly through mud stills and amongst many stones; we landed at *Portage la Savanne*, which we found to be twice the usual length, as there was not a drop of water within eight acres of where

we used to load, and very little indeed where we are obliged to load now.

Conjurors. Here the Bird's second son came to us. Having asked him where he was going to, he answered that he came to meet me as my canoes ahead (with whom he parted at the next Portage,) told him that I was nigh. I then asked him, what news? "Very "bad news," said he "my father was conjured to death by some "Indians who had a spite against him, and my oldest brother "has been very ill and can hardly walk yet; all our children "have been very sick and we would have certainly all died "had I not been a great conjuror, for, when I was young, I "dreamt that all this would happen and in what manner I "would prevent the evil resulting therefrom, although their "spite was so great against us that they intended we should all "die."

He went on telling me a long and absurd story about his own abilities as a conjuror, and the wonders he performed by his dreams, which far exceeded Daniel's, had you taken his word for it. I was sorry for the loss of his father, though he was a d.....d rascal, both with white people and with Indians, but he was a good hunter, from whom I had above a pack last year, and the Hudson's Bay people as much. He told me his lodges were inland, opposite to where I was to pass, at the head of Osnaburgh Lake, which he left the day before yesterday at the desire of his brother, who told him to come and meet me, to know what advice I would give him and where I wanted him to trade this year if he recovered his health, as I had made him a Chief last spring on account of his good behaviour to my people at *Nid du Corbeau*. I asked him if he would return immediately, he answered that he would camp with us to night.



We at last finished this portage and got our canoes launched into Lake *La Savanne*, which is 4 leagues long and in which we made three portages, and landed at The Portage, which we found the same as the last and twice the usual length. It being impossible to camp here, we left our canoes and pieces and went to the other end with our tents, bedding and provisions, and it was quite dark when the people of the other canoes arrived, with only their bedding and kettles.

Lake La  
Savanne.

I gave to the Indian who met me yesterday some corn and tobacco for his brother, telling him that I would give no liquor, as he was sick, in case it would make him worse, but that if I found them on my way at the head of Osnaburgh, I would give them some and a little medicine, and tell them where I would leave a trader for them.

Having passed this Portage, we went on to the next, which is not more than 12 acres distant, and where we had to make two portages in one, as there was not a drop of water between them. This portage was about half a league long through swampy land in which we sunk to our knees; but, in spite of all, the men of our two canoes exerted themselves so well that all was over at 12 o'clock.

From this place we were obliged to make two trips to the next portage, which is about a league distant, and to carry. A man of each canoe remained here to carry while the others went back for the other half. This portage is at least three times the usual length, and we were obliged to make three trips across a little muddy lake almost half a league long, and then to carry from end to end of a place which was formerly a river and which I hope will be one again next spring, but is now as dry as a floor. The men were, however, so anxious to get out of this *enfer*, as they called it, and get once more into clear water, that

Difficult  
navigation.



my canoe got to the *Butte de Sable*, at the entrance of Osnaburgh Lake, where I found the guide with his three canoes just put up. The other three canoes could not get here this evening, but Mr. Dougal Cameron came to me by land, with his bed on his back.

This place is not over 60 leagues from Lake Nepigon, and it took us since the 7th inst! There used to be forty-four portages, but there is double that number this year, and, singular to say, never were people, even at sea, deprived of clean drinkable water as we were during that time. But, thank God, we are again in clean clear water.

25th

Cloudy weather, with a little rain, which did not prevent the other canoes from coming up with us about 10 o'clock. we, however, could not unbalance to dry some of the goods which had got wet, nor could we repair our canoes, which much needed it as their bottoms presented a most shabby appearance from the rubs they got on sticks and stones.

Osnaburgh  
Fort

I went this afternoon to Osnaburgh Fort for some things I had left there last spring and in hopes of meeting Indians, as I am much at a loss how to dispose of the quantity of goods I have here on hand, and which I cannot send to Tront Lake, on account of the lowness of the water.

Kind re-  
ception by  
Mr. Good-  
win.

We were very politely received by Mr. Goodwin, second Factor of Albany Fort, whom we found in charge here. Soon after our arrival, two Indians came from Pine Lake, who told us it was with great difficulty they could get through the lakes in their small canoes, as there was no water at all in some of them. I was very anxious to find an opportunity of speaking to them, but it was very difficult, as they were strictly watched by the interpreter. Having been invited by Mr. Goodwin to remain here all night on account of a violent storm and heavy showers.

of rain, I managed in the evening to speak to one of them, and invited him to come next day to my tent with his brother; that I had something to say to them and wished to make them a present, as I well knew that an Indian is very little influenced by words unless those words are accompanied by something more substantial. They promised me to do so

People unacquainted with the nature of the Indian trade will reckon my behaviour very rude and say that I made very ungrateful returns for the polite hospitality I received. I admit that I am not entirely reconciled to the propriety of the conduct, although it is a very common custom in this country, which nothing but the nature of the trade can excuse.

Mr. Goodwin hid some of our things so as to force us to remain till after breakfast, when we took our leave. Although our party was numerous, consisting of Mr. Dougal Cameron and eight men, besides myself, Mr. Goodwin treated us with the utmost liberality. When we left, the two Indians were lying, dead drunk, after having been troublesome and insolent to the English the whole night. Those people have the patience of Job and are real slaves to the Indians who come to their forts. We keep them at greater distance, which makes them more respectful to us than to the English.

On my arrival at the camp, we opened all the bales that were wet and got all the contents of them dried; we likewise got all the canoes repaired. At 4 o'clock, the two Indians arrived, much to my surprise, as I did not believe Mr. Goodwin would allow them to come. I treated them with a glass of shrub each, which they liked very well; they said the English were too pitiful to have such a chief's liquor as that. I know that they treated them much better than we could afford to do, but they had not the art of convincing the Indians of that.

I inquired of them what Indians they had seen of late, which way they intended to hunt this winter, they told me that they would hunt near Cat Lake, and that, if I left a canoe there, they would trade with us. I told them I would if I could depend on seeing them there, as there would be no others to depend upon but themselves, which in fact would be enough for one canoe, as they number fourteen brothers, all men, besides the father and three sons-in-law.

But they are great cheats for their credits; I, in consequence, desired them not to go there till the beginning of winter, as they had every thing they wanted till then from the English, and, as a further inducement for their coming, I told them that I would make them a present of their old debts they owed since the winter before last at Pine Lake. Nothing was lost by the promise, as I was quite sure that we would never see a skin's worth of these old credits. I then gave them a two gal. Keg net high wines and three fathoms of tobacco for their friends, desiring them to tell the others every thing I said to them, and telling that if the trade at Cat Lake did not content them in the course of the winter, never to mind that, to wait for me there next spring, and that I would satisfy them myself.

Those Indians are almost strangers to me; I have not the same influence with them as with all the other Indians of the Department, as they seldom dealt with any of us, and only saw me now and then. *en passant*.

27th - We started early, the seven canoes together, and went on against a strong head wind which obliged us to lay by for 3 hours, so that we only travelled 10 leagues, a little over half the lake.

28th - Dull cloudy weather, still blowing pretty fresh; we went on as fast as we could, my canoe leading the way, and, at 8 o'clock,

I found the Indians whom I met on the 24th. The sick man was fast recovering, but still being very weak, he asked me for some medicine and I gave him some lozenges &c, turlington, to stop the spitting of blood; I likewise gave them some corn, as they had nothing to eat but blueberries and wild cherries, of which they gave us more than we wished.

The other canoes soon arrived and put ashore to know if I wanted any thing, but as I did not desire to unbale any thing here, I told them that they might make the best of their way to the Portage, yet 5 leagues off, as there was appearance of rain, and the wind was gradually increasing.

I then asked the Indian where he intended to hunt this winter, he told me that, as there were many beavers hereabouts, he would pass the winter between this and a lake he named, at 30 leagues ahead on our route. I disliked to see him hunt so near Osnaburgh and wished to prevail on him to go where he was last year, but he said they ruined all the beaver in that quarter before they left it, and, if he went there, none of them would be able to pay their credits. I then told him to follow us as far as Portage Plé, and if I found any Indians there, as I expected, we would then consult together where it would be more convenient for them to have a house, as they were too few here to leave a canoe, which, besides, would be making opposition to *Lac Seul*, which is not far from this, and Mr. R. Cameron is to be there.

He consented to follow me there to know where I would leave a canoe and take credits, since I would not give them any here, but asked me for some liquor to get drunk, which they reckon the most efficacious medicine of all to cure every disease, and in fact sends a great many to their grave. But example has no effect upon them, their desires must be gratified at any cost. I granted his request, but telling him at the same time that drinking was contrary to his present state of health.

It now blew very hard, but we kept up to windward as much as possible, among a number of islands; when we got clear of them, we hoisted about a yard of sail which bore us before the wind at a great rate. We saw the five other canoes sheltered in a bay to the right of us, the wind being to nigh to their left side they were obliged to lay by, which they well deserved as they were entirely out of the way, instead of keeping to windward as we did. I was astonished to find the falls which we often ran down with half loaded canoes, entirely dry.

30th

The rain kept us here the whole day yesterday, but the weather having cleared up this afternoon, I ordered the men to load the 2 canoes, that we might get past before dark some ugly stony shoals, about a league long, which were ahead of us. The water having risen three inches since the 28th we went on slowly among the stones and were obliged to make two portages in places where we had never carried before. The oldest Indians in the country say that they never saw the water so low before.

We were here overtaken by a violent storm of wind, hail and rain which we were obliged to endure on the water, the water being so shallow all around us that there was no possibility of reaching the shore; it was with great difficulty we prevented our canoes from being dashed to pieces against the rocks. We, however, got out safe and encamped on an island, where the Indians came up with us. I asked them if they saw my canoes, they said no, that they kept to the left to be under the lee, as the waves ran very high.....

SEPTEMBER

2d  
Chief  
"Cotton  
shirt."

We started on the 31 ult. without waiting for the other canoes, as I expected to find Indians soon, who would detain me, and this morning, at 9, we entered *Lac des Ecorces* where I found

the Indians I expected, with a few others. We had hardly pitched our tents when they came to us, making the usual demand for tobacco; I gave them each about 6 inches, and having asked them where they intended to winter, one of them, which the white men have named "Cotton shirt," said that he was waiting here for me to ask for a trader and a canoe to be left at *Portage Plêlé*, where he said that the men would find plenty white fish to maintain themselves, and that he, as well as the others, intended to hunt hereabout, which is the only place they know where a few beavers remain. It is a general complaint in the whole département that beaver is getting very scarce.

"Cotton shirt" has always been very faithful to me these several years past, he is, without exception, the best hunter in the whole department, and passes as having, in consequence, great influence over me. One of his elder brothers spoke next and said that he was now grown up a man; that "his Fort," as he calls Osnaburgh, was too far off for the winter trade, that if I left any one here, he would come to them in winter with skins; he could not live without getting drunk 3 or 4 times at least, but that I must leave a clerk to deal with him, as he was above trading with any young understrappers. I told him that if I consented to leave a person here, I would leave one that had both sense and knowledge enough to know how to use him well; as also any other great man.

A haughty  
Chief.

This Indian has been spoiled by the H. B. people at Osnaburgh Fort, where he may consider himself master; having been invited there to dine last spring, I saw him sitting at table with us, and not satisfied with getting himself a share of every thing on the table, acted the "landlord" by giving shares to his people who were around, without any one finding fault with him. I then told them to go and smoke a while in their lodges, and that I would send for them when ready with an answer, as I

never spoke my mind empty handed as they did. They all answered that they were pitiful at present, otherwise they would ~~not have spoken to me in that pitiful manner.~~ They went to their lodges and I got 4 two. gal. kegs mixed, as there were 4 of them who reckoned themselves chiefs, but, in general, the chiefs in this part of the country are the greatest rogues among them, for if an Indian is a good hunter, and has the usual large stock of impudence which they generally have, with a little cunning, you must make a chief of him to secure his hunt, otherwise your opponents will debauch him from you, and you are sure to lose him.

Trading  
chiefs.

They are all remarkably proud of being reckoned great men, but still they have little or no influence over the others, for, after making the father a chief, you are sometimes obliged to do the same with his son in order to secure his hunt, for the former has not power enough over him to secure it for you, let him be however so willing. They only have some influence when they get a keg of rum from their trader to treat the others with, and can get plenty of ammunition and tobacco to share with them.

They are great men while that lasts, but as the Indians, in general, have very little sense of gratitude in their nature, when the chief has nothing to bestow on them, all past favors are forgotten and his influence is at an end till he has it in his power to begin again. I often saw them get a good beating from them they were treating and some time getting their noses bit off, which was the case a few weeks ago with this great English partisan, whose nose was bit off by his son-in-law at the door of what he calls "his fort." He is not yet cured and says that a great man like him must not get angry or take any revenge, especially when he stands in awe of the person who ill used



him, for there is nothing an Indian will not do rather than admit himself to be a coward.

Being ready, I sent for them ; they all came, as they knew it was to receive and not to give ; I, however, got 23 skins credits from them. As soon as they were placed, I treated them with a bottle of shrub of which they thought a great deal, and then made them a speech on the usual topics, thanking them that behaved well to my people last year, and telling them that while they continued so to behave, I would take care they should never want wherewith to cover themselves from the inclemencies of the weather and bring up their children. They were very proud of this compliment being paid them in presence of the other Indians.

The compliments being over, I began to animadvert with the others on their inconsistency and the false promises that some of them had made me before, and that it was perhaps with a view to deceive me again that they wanted me to leave people there, and no sooner would they have received sufficient to enable to pass the winter, they would forget they were holding my goods, iron works or ammunition for their hunt, and only think of taking their skins to Osnaburgh or elsewhere without paying above half of their credits, or considering in the least the liquor, ammunition, knives, flints, &c. bestowed upon them in the course of the fall, winter and spring, while the English were at a distance and making no expense for them. Still I was sure they would expect from me, next spring, as if I had bestowed on them nothing more than the English. That if I was to give them all that they would cost in the course of the season at one time, they would find that I was far more liberal than the English ever were.

Trading-interviews and conferences.

I told them I would look upon as chiefs or great men only such as were proud of their word, as it was beneath a great



man to tell a lie or make a false promise, it was for that reason they never saw me guilty of not performing my promises. That I would be very happy to leave people with them if they all promised to be faithful to me, or at least pay their credits: that they would find that I knew better than the English how to reward those that behaved well, an evident proof of that was that I always got a larger share of the trade than any of the English who were alongside of me these fifteen winters, although the Indians from whom I had that share these last seven years were brought up by the people of York Fort and Severn, and never saw any one from the French till they saw me. "We know," said the Osnaburgh chief, "that you got the best share of the trade wherever you wintered, and if you will remain here yourself, you will get every skin of our hunt."

Indians  
discour-  
aged from  
fishing.

I told them I was very sorry I could not remain, as I had yet several posts to arrange on the way, which was the reason which always obliged me to go to the furthest posts, but that the person I intended to leave would use them as well as I could, and that the strouds, blankets and other articles cut and measured by him would be just as good as cut and measured by me, and that if they did not think themselves well used by him, never to mind that, nor leave the post, as I would myself make them ample amends for their good behaviour on my arrival here, next spring. That I knew some of them, would always be true to me as heretofore, and that I did not mean them, as I knew their hearts and minds to be the same as mine.

The English Chief, who knew he had no share in this compliment, thought of revenging himself upon me by saying that I made my packs more with my tongue and speeches than with my liberality; that I received an Indian well, but never gave him too much, "a proof of that" says he "is that, of two of your

“ chiefs, my brother and brother-in-law, none of them has a net to set, although they both seem very fond of fish when they get some from me. The English always give me two nets every spring, but you never give your chiefs any.” I replied that I would be sorry to despise my chiefs so much as to use them like old woman in giving them nets to live on when they were such good hunters and could always maintain themselves like men with their guns. Therefore, instead of nets, I always gave them ammunition, which was a much dearer article. He answered that he got ammunition as well as them but was glad to eat fish now and then, moreover, the best hunters could not sometimes find animals to kill. “ However ” said he “ you shall not call me a chief next spring, for whatever I will take here I will pay for before going anywhere else, but as you dislike them who tell you lies, I tell you before hand that I must go to Osnaburgh next spring to pay my credits and keep the Indians in order about my Fort.

I told him he now spoke like a Chief, and that as he was one of those who asked for a house here, I expected he would encourage his young men to pay their credits, and not entice any other Indians to go with him to Osnaburgh, in that case I should use him like a chief, and clothe him as such on my way out, next spring.

They then all began to make promises of behaving well ; this was just what I wanted, as I was determined from the beginning to leave a canoe here and only wanted to be enticed to it by them, so as to have a better hold on them. I accordingly told them I would leave a canoe, especially as “ Cotton shirt ” and those who came along with him desired it, and gave them the 4 two gal. kegs, desiring them to drink quietly and not to come and trouble me when they were drukk, as I would be very busy on the arrival of my canoes, which I hourly expected, in making

the outfit for this place. They then left me, went to their lodges and began their frolic. My canoes arrived in the evening.

I would not have enlarged so much on this subject which will undoubtedly appear nonsensical to the reader who is acquainted with business, but which may have some interest to those who have no idea of the manner in which the business of this country is carried on.

3rd.

Indian and  
Voyageur  
pride.

I began to make the outfit for this place, which I gave in charge to Régiste Bellefleur, much against his will, as his pride was very much hurt by the Osnaburg Chief, who would not acknowledge him to be a *great man*; the Canadians whom we raise from an inferior station to a higher one are just as vain of being reckoned "great men" as the Indians themselves, but very seldom adopt the means necessary for their advancement. Vanity, selfishness, and drunkenness soon spoil the greater part of them. However, I had no one else to leave but Mr. Cameron, who is much wanted elsewhere. I gave him four good men, among whom is Michel Forcier, who is to act as his assistant, as he is the ablest man for that purpose in the whole brigade.

I was greatly troubled by the Indians all day; they had now things to say which they could not say yesterday when they were sober, besides repeating what they had told me twenty times over. I, therefore, hastened to get the outfit ready, much against their will, the bales made up, the canoes loaded, and gave orders to the guide for tomorrow morning.

4th

A fine day. The guide started very early with the brigade, and Mr. Dougall Cameron and myself remained here waiting for an Indian who was hourly expected, and with whom I had a bone to pick before I left this, an account of his daring misbehaviour to some of our people last spring, and in hopes to prevent him from attempting to do the same in future, and, likewise, to

give the Indians, who were now sober, their credits, which they all took in the course of the day to the number of 560 skins, which I thought enough at present for so few of them, although they would willingly take as much more, if I consented to give them.

The Indian I expected soon arrived. I reprimanded him severely for his past conduct, and warned him what the consequences would be to himself if he attempted to behave in the like manner again. I then gave the whole of them a nine gal. keg of mixt high wines, encouraging them once more to pay their credits, behave well with their traders and not to expect any more liquor from him unless they hunted something for it.

We started from where we left Bellefleur and arrived on the 6th, at 8 o'clock in the morning, at —Lake, where I found Jean Bte Sauvé, one of our half gentlemen, who had arrived a few days ago from Big Lake with a letter from Mr. McFarlane, letting me know that the "Suckers," ten men in number, had not been there last spring to pay their credits, but had gone down to Severn Fort with all their hunt since the beginning of January last. He likewise tells me that he thought it would be impossible for us to get to the white fishing place, as the rivers and small lakes were in some places quite dry.

I remarked to Sauvé, who was telling me that it would take us twenty days to perform what was generally done in seven, that after what we had already surmounted, we feared no road, as we could find none worse; that a summer man was no judge of what a smart set of men as I had there could do, and that I would lay bet with him or any person that we would get there in ten days at the utmost. "You must have men that can do wonders then," said he, "we could not come along with our small canoes without carrying them in places where even the big canoes had never unloaded before."

The Indian who accompanied Sauvé followed him with his

family not only for the purpose of serving as guide, but in order to be out of the way of his only brother, whom he had dangerously stabbed in a drinking match last spring in this place, where they had waited for me to pay the rest of their credits and be clothed. This accident arrived about two hours after I left them; these two brothers appeared to love each other as any brothers I have known since I first came to this country.

As it was raining very hard, we were obliged to remain here all day doing very little, as I could not unbalance to make the outfit. I intended to leave here, according to the promise I made to the Indians I saw at Osnaburgh. I consequently passed part of the day conversing with the Indians, especially with Mr. Sauv e's guide, to whom I gave some liquor which he drank very quietly. I reprimanded him for what he did to his brother, he told me he did not know what he was doing and knew nothing of it when he recovered his senses and found his brother so ill, till his wife told him all about it.

In the afternoon, I named the four men who are to remain with Mr. Sauv e, and told the guide that, as the water was so low, I would leave no canoe here, but take a man out of each of his four canoes, and that the assortment I intended to leave here would lighten them of seven pieces each, which would enable them to go through the shoal places easier than with their full loads and a fifth man; that Mr. Dougle Cameron and myself would continue in our canoes as usual with our full load and manage the best we could. I spent the rest of this rainy day in giving Mr. Sauv e all the instructions required, and communicated to him the arrangement made with the Indians at Osnaburgh.

.....  
 .....(1)

(1) Several pages missing.

I asked this Indian's son if he knew the road, he told me he <sup>22nd</sup> did, and I told them then that he and his cousins must go.....  
 ..... English were there and must make all the haste they could..... and meet me at Fly Lake, that I would pay them well for their pains. They were not very willing, but I prevailed on them to consent and told Mr. Munro that he must go along with them, to hurry them on, as well as to give me an account of how the road is. The old man asked me why I was so anxious to know whether they were there or not. I told him if they were there, I would go myself alongside of them; he said that if I went, he would go too; but I wanted to persuade him from it, as there was no opposition at Big Lake, where his skins would be got cheaper than alongside of the English, especially as he was indebted to them since last year and gave them a share of his hunt, last year, for which I gave him a proper set down. However, he insisted on going along with me. He is a very wild fellow and not easily managed by E but with me he is, without exception, the best Indian in the country, at least I found he was so for 3 years I was trading with him alongside of the English, but Mr. McFarlane and he cant agree.....  
 .....  
 .....

I wrote a few lines by him to Mr. McFarlane to send me the credits of some Indians I named him and which I supposed to be that way. Could not finish this long portage today.

Early in the morning I went to rouse up the men who were <sup>23rd</sup> to go with Mr. Munro, which was no easy thing, as they had been drunk all night and are still; however, I got them off at last, desiring Munro to make all the haste he could, and not show himself to the English, should they be there. I told the young men not to let any one know that he was with them or what they were there for; not to allow themselves to be detained

on any account, and that I would reward them well on their return if they acted faithfully.

This evening I got to Portage Laf , but the guide did not come up with the two other canoes as he had a man lame in each of them who were not as smart and ambitious as the men with me.

24th

We went on, without waiting for the guide, through an ugly shoal river, full of sticks and stones, in which we were obliged to make several portages more than usual. Here I came to the *Grande Outarde's* loge; I took some dried meat which he desired me to ask his sister for, an old widow woman who remained here to take care of the children and lodge; after this we went on as fast as we could to get to the place where I was to wait for Munro, being desirous of getting out of this troublesome river. We got there late in the evening, after a hard days work.

25th

Some rain; my canoes came up in the afternoon, but one of them, Laplante's "St Louis", got very bad usage and was torn in two places in this river. This is the third canoe he has worn almost out since Lake Superior, although he is a Grand River bowman. We have to remain here doing nothing and waiting with impatience the return of Munro, whom we only expect on the 28th.

A cloudy cold day; about six, we heard the report of a gun not far off, which I immediately answered, and a few moments after I saw a heave in sight which, to my satisfaction, turned out to be Mr. Munro and the two young men who went with him. He told me that the English were in fact building where I had been told, that the road was very bad. After having requested him not to say a word about that to the men, I asked him if he knew what Indians were there, he told me to ask his

guide, as he did not understand him very well, and that he would certainly tell me all, as one of the young men saw his father, who is the greatest Chief the English have in that quarter and from whom he got all the news, without even going near the house.

The guide stated that he hid himself near the lodge which was about four miles from the house, and that the young men were faithful to my orders. They did not remain in the *loge* over twenty minutes, although he was the father of the one and uncle of the other. I then began to question the young men, who told me of all the Indians who had been there, seven in number. Having asked them about an Indian called "the Cedar," they told me that the Indians supposed him dead by this time of a bruising he got about a month ago from a brother of his in a drinking frolic, that he could neither stand nor walk when they left him, two of his ribs being broken and his breast shockingly bruised.

Vicious  
disposi-  
tions of the  
Natives.

This occurred at a place where the Indians of that quarter were waiting for the English. So soon as the latter had got all they could from the Indians and given them liquor, they thought it more prudent to go and camp further on, to be out of their reach, as they are the greatest ruffians to be met in this country, especially with the English, whom they certainly use very ill. They killed one of their traders five years ago, and instead of having punished the murderer, he is one of their greatest chiefs at present: it is not, therefore, surprising if the Indians are daring with them.

I then inquired about the brother who so cruelly used his brother. His name is "The Big Eyes," and it would appear that the ruffian crippled himself under the most shockingly brutal circumstances, which I shall relate, as it gives an idea of the character of those Indians. In the night time as he was sitting in a dark *loge* or wigwam, and seeing another person sitting before



him, he took up his axe and, without the least provocation and without even knowing who the person was, whether his son or wife, he struck a blow, with the intention of splitting his skull. But as good luck would have it, the devil, it seems, was playing his share in this mischievous design; he missed his intended victim and struck himself straight on the knee ball, which he split in two. A just punishment for his treacherous designs.

27th.

I set to work and divided the goods. I fitted a loaded canoe for the Lake of the Islands under the charge of Mr. Munro, with six men; another canoe for Owl Lake, with only a small assortment, but still as much as the place could pay for; this I gave in charge to Joseph Monier, the guide, who is a very careful, honest man, but has very little talents with Indians, although he has been a long time in this country. I gave him the only man I had who could speak Indian, to be his interpreter and four other men besides.

Mr. Munro has an interpreter, also, who summered with him and is now in charge of the goods at Lake of the Islands during Mr. Munro's absence, so that these two posts are well arranged, and have at least as much goods as they can make returns for; they will be easily managed, as I left the Indians last spring on a very good footing and much attached to me. There still remains 17 pieces of trading goods, which, with my provisions and 7 men (as I have taken one out of the guide's canoe,) will make a heavy loaded canoe, with which I intend to attempt this bad road, to get alongside my old neighbours, the English, in the hope of taking a few packs from them, in order to help me to keep up the usual average of returns from this Department, which would be impossible were I to confine myself within the usual limits; as beaver is getting too scarce.

This morning, I sent two men to the *Grande Outarde* with his son, as I supposed him by this time returned from Big Lake,

which was only six leagues off, to bring all the leather I saw in his lodge, as my men were out of shoes, and also for a small canoe which he must sell me. I provided his son well for the voyage before I sent him back. The men came back in the evening without either leather or canoe, but told me that the Indian and his whole party was coming to follow me, and that, as they were too much crowded in their canoes, they were obliged to leave some of their things. This gave me no hope of getting a canoe from him.

He arrived a few minutes after and gave me the credits I desired Mr. McFarlane to send me. I then prevailed on him to give me all the leather they had, which was only 1½ dressed moose skins. I also obtained the canoe, though with more reluctance, but I could admit of no refusal, being too much in need of one. He told me he could not, after giving his canoe, stir from this, as they were already too much crowded in four how could they stow themselves in three. As this argument did not suit my purpose, I did not seem to understand it, and told him to make two trips between each portage as I have been obliged to do several times this summer.

The last thing I did was drawing a chart of the road for Mr. Munro, who was afraid losing his way after having parted with the guide, although he passed there twice this summer and one of his men has been there as often as myself. I wish the road I am going through may be no more difficult than that, and I shall want no guide to bring me out next spring.

A cold cloudy day. Mr. Munro and Monier left together; 28th. they are to follow the same course for five day's march, and then the former will continue his course north, and have an ugly swampy portage of seven miles to cross, then another shoal river and eight more portages to go through. I, therefore, instructed him to take a man from Monier's canoe when they

He leaves  
for the in-  
terior.

separated, so that he might get on faster for fear of being ice locked as I had been two years ago in the same road. The guide will then have to ascend a large river, his course being W. S. W. and will not encounter the same difficulties.

I told them I would go in a small canoe and meet them next spring, if I lived, at their parting place, to settle the next summer's affairs and speak to the Indians once more before I left the country. We got our canoes loaded and took our leave of each other, my course being to the west.

My canoe was very much lumbered; I put a man and his wife in the small canoe and embarked in the other small canoe with my guides, after giving some liquor to the old man and his sons who must remain here to-day to try and pack all in their three canoes.

Accident;  
ammuni-  
tion dam-  
aged.

We went on as well as we could against a cold head wind till the big canoe got on a stone which nearly upset her and tore a piece two feet square out of her bottom. She filled immediately and the men and goods were all in danger of going to the bottom before they reached the shore; notwithstanding their efforts, she sank in three feet of water.

We hastened to get everything out of her, but my sugar and their molasses was damaged, but worse than all, my powder, which I immediately examined, was considerably damaged; I did not dare let the men know this last misfortune, as it would have discourage them. It took us only three hours to repair and reload the canoes, yet this accident threw a gloom on this voyage, and the men, with their superstitious ideas, said that such an accident, at the very outset, was a sure sign that this road would be an unfortunate one for us, but I ridiculed the idea in such a manner that I heard no more of it. The canoe was now deeper loaded than ever as the bales were all wet, we got to the

first portage only after sunset. It was cold and freezing very hard.

Very cold in the morning, all the bays taken with ice; we made 2 portages before breakfast which gave us a deal of work as we then thought, but now we are come to the 3rd, which will make us work in earnest, and God knows when we will have done with it.

OCTOBER,  
4th.  
Difficulties  
of the voy-  
age.

In order to find the best way out, I went with one of my guides to the top of a high hill which was on the right hand, at about the middle of the portage, and from which I could see the water at both ends, I never saw such a place before; the fallen wood is equally thick from one end to the other. I had to employ all hands twenty four hours to make a road about half a league long, and we had every thing across on the 30th, at 2 o'clock.

Last evening, the *Grande Outarde* came up to us with no less than fourteen Indians, young and old, with all their lumber in three canoes. I asked him if there was no other road by which the portages were less difficult to make, as it would take us till all the lakes were fast with ice to make the portage in this road; he told me that by leaving this road by which Mr. Munro returned and making two portages, neither of which being very long, that I would fall into the road by which the English went to Lac Carriboux, which would again bring me into the road by which I went out from Wind Lake, which went through the lake I was going to.

I determined to take that road though it was farther round about, he said he would go by another road in which he hoped to find a few beavers. I desired him to take his time and be in no hurry to come to me till he hunted every thing he found on the way. As the English had already got every thing the Indians had, I would be badly off for want of parchment to make

snowshoes, and I had only them to depend on, so that they must not come till they have some. They promised to do their best and we parted again.

His arrival;  
poor prospect.

I continued going on as hard as I could, as the weather was getting very cold, with frost and snow. Arrived today at the longed for place, where I found the Hudson's Bay people. six in number, who had not done building yet, although they have been a month here. They gave me a very bad account of the fishing in this lake and said they would have already starved, had it not been for the provisions they brought with them and some meat they got from the Indians. This was bad news for me, as I had only two kettles of corn remaining, but I was pretty well provided with nets, hooks and lines, and well accustomed to places where every shift must be made to get over the long and inclement winters of this country, so that I have still good hopes of weathering out this one as usual, for I have now been twenty years in this country, and so fortunate, that I never lost a man by starvation in any place, although I have been, and am now, in some of the worst posts of the country, for living.

H. B. Co's  
competition.

Improvidence of  
the North-  
Westers.

It was useless for me to enquire from the English about the Indians. They could not conceal their surprise on seeing me arrive, and the master said very simply that it was useless for them to try to hide themselves while I remained in the country, as I would always find them out. "So, said I, "you came here in hope of being out of the way of opposition," he admitted he did and said he might have put up at a far better place for living and have the same Indians, but that he thought this a place where no one would find him or his Indians out, and, if they did, he thought no one would venture to put up here for fear of starvation, as we never brought any supply of provisions with us for our men. This language so provoked me, that I told

him I was in hopes of living as well as they, if not better, in spite of their pork and flour, and had, in some places, lived far better than they did when in opposition to them, and that, although Mr. Munro had been starving along side of him last winter, at Wind Lake, while he had plenty, that that was no rule, as he was a green hand in the country.

I immediately had a few nets mounted and appointed 2 men to attend to them exclusively with the small canoe I brought along with me, and without which I would be very badly off, as there is no possibility of getting any here. I then looked for a place to build and told the men to have their axes ready to begin to-morrow, as we had no time to lose. I paid my guides handsomely and sent them off with a gal. keg net High wines, to go and look out for the English Chief, who was father of one of them and uncle to the other, whose father died last year.

We all set to work : four men to build, one to square boards for the doors timber for the floors and shelves for the shop, the two others, to attend the net. In the evening, my guide's father arrived with another Indian and their families ; they told me they were sorry they did not know of my coming here before they paid such large credits to my neighbours, but they promised to do whatever they could for me. I received them well and spoke to them in the usual manner, in hopes of having a share of their hunt.

The *Grande Outarde* arrived with all his family ; his wife was very sick, for which I am sorry, as it will prevent him from doing any thing, so long as she continues so. They brought me six green beavers, two otters and a hairy deer skin ; in the evening, two other Indians arrived, but brought only two skins, which I got.

There are now eight Indians here, all drunk and very troublesome to my neighbour, who, I believe, is as drunk as themselves; they are all very civil to me, and so they may, for I am giving them plenty to drink, without getting anything from them as yet. They all take some credits from me and make very fair promises, but time alone will say whether they are sincere.

We are going pretty well with our building, but very poorly with the fishing, for we can hardly take what will make one meal a day, and I have already been obliged to give some flour to the men.

.....

11th. We got all the Indians away from this place. The *Grande Outarde's* wife continues to be very ill, and I believe will not get over it, which will be a loss to me.

.....

7th. An Indian from Red Lake arrived here with one of my guides and one of Mr. Adhemar's men who left that place, the 18th of last month, to come in quest of Indians who owe debts there since last spring. He found some of them, but got nothing from them as yet. As he expected to return soon when he left the house, he brought no clothes with him, and, I suppose, left very little behind, as he has all the appearance of a real *panier percé*. He wished me to assist him and another man he left at the *loge* with each a suit of clothes to serve them till they went back, which would be about the latter end of January. I assisted them accordingly and asked him if Mr. Adhemar would not require them, or be uneasy about them up to that time: he said not, that there were men enough at the house and that the Indians they were with would not take them back till they had hunted half their credits; one of them owed 100 skins to Mr.

Adhemar, but when he heard I was so near, he told them he would go and see his "father" as he called me. Is adopted  
as Father.

I sent Mr. Adhemar's men and the Indians with my Iroquois to live along with them as we were hard up for provisions, and as two of the Indians who took credits from me were in the gang and would be here about Christmas, I desired the Indian who adopted me as his Father to use Mr. Adhemar's men well, and to help them to get as many of his credits as came on their way, and that he would be well rewarded for it.

This man tells me that the English, the X. Y. and Mr. Adhemar were striving who would squander most and, thereby, please the Indians best, but the consequence will be that the Indians will get all they want for half the value and laugh at them all, in the end. He told me that an Indian, who I know very well to have no influence on any one but himself, got 5 kegs of mixt high wines to himself alone between the three houses and took 200 skins credits; that all the Indians were 15 days without getting once sober. Ruinous  
competi-  
tion.

I leave it to any rational being to judge what that Indian's skins will cost; he must give at least as much more liquor to get his skins from him. Besides being twice paid in dry goods, he and his wife must be clothed and must get several other presents over their bargain, such as tobacco, ammunition, knives, awls, needles, flints &c, all of which cost money, so that his skins will cost at least three times their value. This is not the only instance, but only one out of many at present, so that, if no arrangements take place soon to prevent this squandering and put the trade on a better footing, it will require but a very short time to sink more money than has been gained in the country for several years back.



Its effects  
on the  
Indians.

The Indians have lost all industry and are becoming careless about hunting and paying their credits, as they very well know that when one will refuse, another more extravagant will readily give. They now get a quantity of things so easily that they have grown quite extravagant and put no value on goods at all, supposing that, if those goods were so valuable, we would not so easily part with them, and begin to think that their skins are become so valuable that there is no possibility of satisfying them, for they will tell you that such a one offered them so and so, and that they expected you to give the same since you wanted skins.

It is now useless to tell them that those people only come to deceive them out of spite, against us, that they were all men we would not employ, that they would soon be pitiful and be obliged to leave the country, they answer that we told them so several years ago, but that instead of leaving the country they are getting more numerous every year, which would not be the case, if the few packs they made did not satisfy and pay them for all they gave for it. Although we always told them that those people were throwing away their goods to mislead the Indians, that, now, they begin to perceive that we were imposing upon them to get their skins for nothing as we did formerly, and render them poor and pitiful as they had always been till those charitable people came among them.

Decline of  
the trade.

Notwithstanding all these complaints and arguments against us, we still get the three-fourths of the trade. But I am sorry to say that, even if there were no opposition at all in the country to spoil the trade, it is now getting so barren and poor that in a dozen of years hence, the returns from it will be so trifling that, even if one company had the whole, on the cheapest terms, it will be little enough to pay the expenses of carrying on the business, for the hunt is declining very fast, and we are obliged every

year to make new discoveries and settle new posts. - Even with all that, we cannot keep the former average of returns, although the consummation of goods is increasing every year, and I believe that our discoveries are now about at an end, and that the trade cannot be extended much further than it is at present.

Another circumstance which will tend to injure the trade very much, so long as we have the Hudson's Bay Company against us, is the premium they allow every Factor or Master on whatever number of skins they obtain. Those people do not care at what price they buy or whether their employers gain by them so long as they have their premium, which sets them in opposition to one another almost as much as they are to us. The Honorable Hudson's Bay Company's proprietors very little knew their own interest when they first allowed this interest to their "Officers," as they call them, as it certainly had not the desired effect, for, if it added some to their exertions, it led in a greater degree to the squandering of their goods, as they are, in general, both needy and selfish.

We got in our building, which is now weather proof, but not finished in the inside; it is 40 feet long and 20 wide, divided into a room and bed room for myself, a shop and a room for my men, 10 feet long on the whole breadth of the house. The only good material I found here to build is excellent loam, very white, which enabled us to make the house very warm and make two good chimneys. I had, and have still, to do my share of the labour, as the men are very unhandy about building, but, still, we shall have a tolerably neat house for this part of the world.

I begin to be afraid that we shall be much in want of the principal things to make the inside comfortable, as my men

who were trying for a fall fishing returned today and only got 400 fish in all, so that, if the lake is no better in winter than now, which is very seldom in any lake, the Lord have mercy upon us, for we shall be in a sad situation, as I expect no assistance from the Indians who are all starving already themselves.

A Fall fishery.

Some people who may peruse this may desire to know what a fall fishing means and how the fish is preserved without salt. I shall describe both as well as I can.

In the month of October, the white fish run up from the deep waters to spawn on shoal banks and on sandy and gravelly bottoms, or to the shoal entrance of a river where there is some current, which is some time preferable, as they resort in greater numbers to the last, when it can be found. Here, a variety of other fish gather to feed on the roes of the white fish, so that, in a good spawning place, they sometimes get two or three hundred fish in one night. We select the best of these places and visit them several times while the spawning continues; both to take out the fish from the nets and to untangle them.

We then pierce the fish with the point of a knife through the bone, at about two inches from the tail and string them by tens on a twisted willow branch, then hang them on poles, with their heads downwards, in a shady place. The slime drops down and they will keep in this manner exceedingly well; some people even prefer them to fresh fish if they do not endure too much warm weather before they freeze, in which case they take a strong rank taste.

NOVEMBER  
17th.

Love of li-  
quor.

The weather continues very warm for the season, much more so than last month, but we are getting no fish, although the lake stands as free of ice as in July, so that we are obliged to live on the few fish we caught last month, which will not last us long. Some of the Indians pay us a visit now and then, but with little

or nothing, and still they expect that we must receive them and give them something every time they come, just the same as if we had not seen them these two months and as if they brought us one pack each. They seem to think of nothing else but getting drunk, and think, now, that there ought to be no more sparing of our liquor with them than if we took it at the water side; boys of about twelve years old are as anxious for it as their fathers, and the women more so, if possible, than either.

I soon got tired of this extravagant custom and spoke to them about it in a manner which, I hope, will make them attend better to their hunt, and bring something worth a dram when they come, otherwise, they would get none from me, as I very well knew that, after drinking my liquor, they would leave me without regard to what they already got, and take their furs where they would get more; that it was not for my use that I was sparing, as they well knew I was not a drunkard, but for any of them that did want it, and that they would always find liquor whenever they brought any thing.

I also perceived that my neighbour was getting tired of this custom as well as myself, for he only gave with reluctance and for fear they would leave him entirely, as they often threatened to do when he refused them anything.

Two Indians arrived with my Iroquois and Mr. Adhemar's 19th men; they brought me 70 skins and as much meat as will make a St. Andrews feast for us all, of which we are much in need, as we caught very few fish in this month.

Although this is the coldest weather I ever saw in this country, try at this time of the year, (indeed, ever since 1797,) there has not been over three feet of snow on the ground, and the springs are milder than usually before that time. I leave it for some of the learned to account for that, as I am not qualified to do it, it is not owing to any improvement of cultivation or otherwise, climate.

for the country is now in the same wild state it was in when I first came to it.

.....

30th.

A cold day at last, with some snow. I invited my neighbour to breakfast and dine with me for the first time, and gave him good Madeira to drink at dinner, but I believe he would have preferred high wines, to which he is accustomed. Mr. Adhemar's men remained here with the Indians, and I wrote to him, as also to Mr. Randall Cameron, by them, giving all the news.

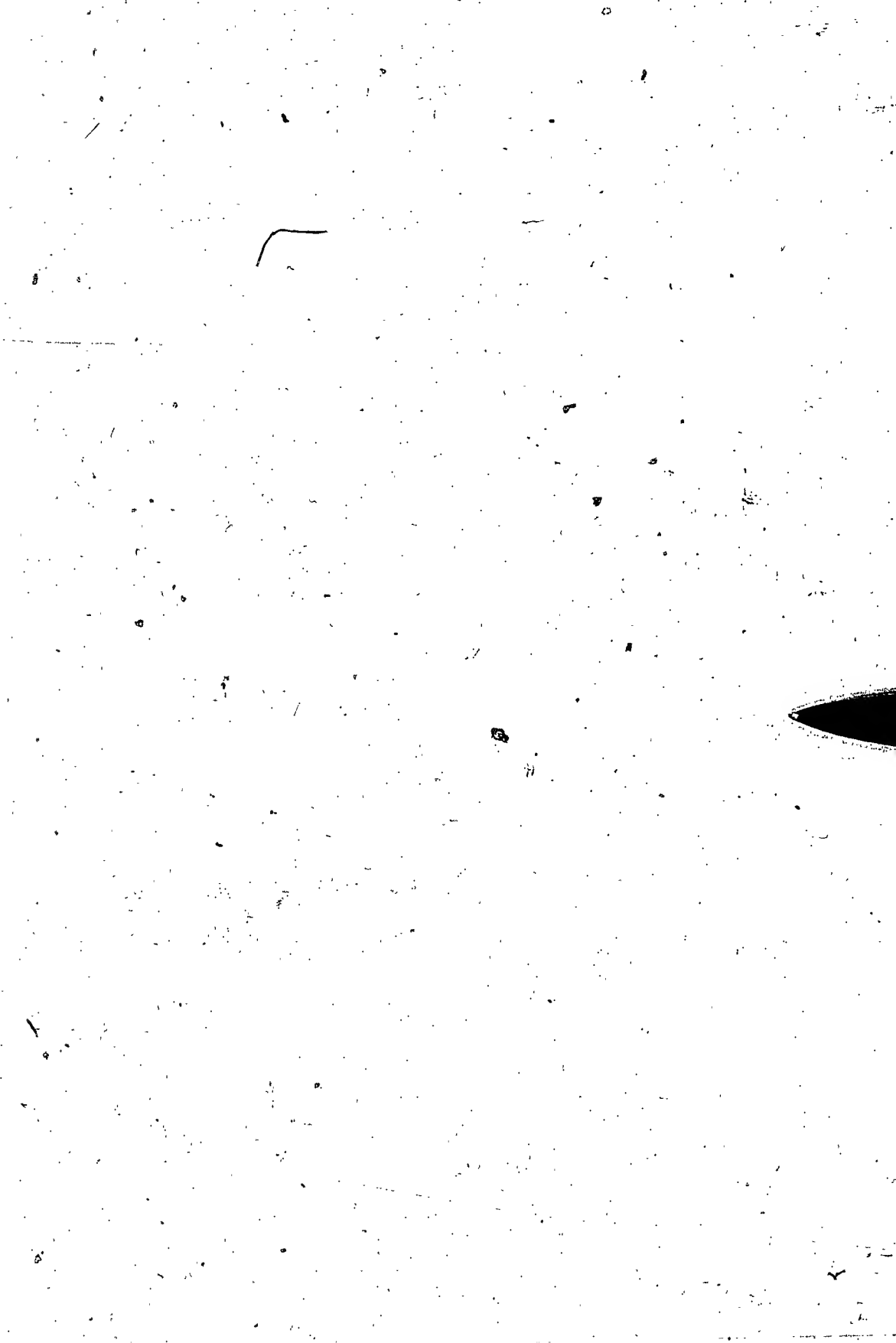
DECEMBER.  
2nd.

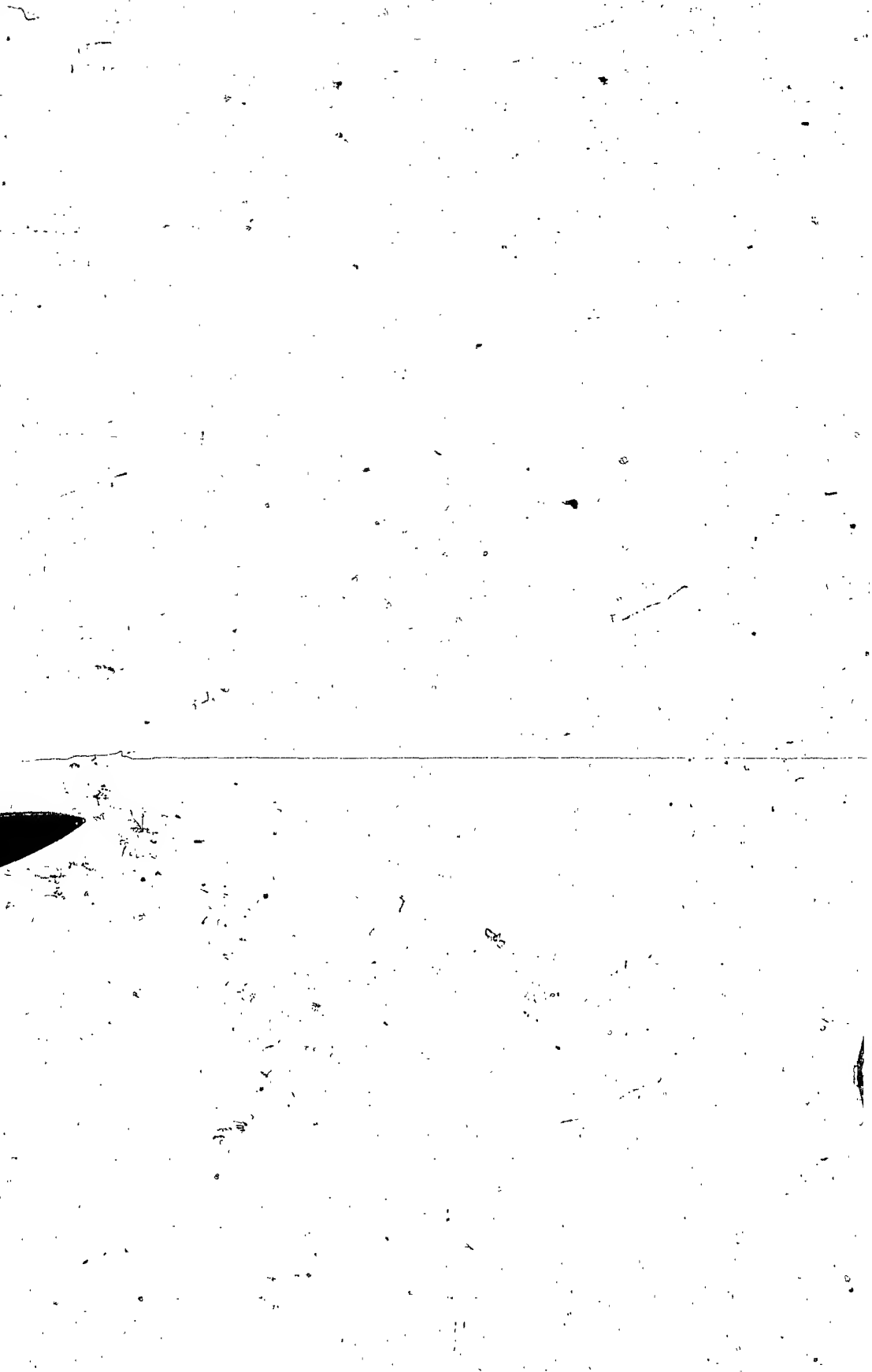
Mr. Adhemar's men went away with two Indians to whom I gave two gallons of net high wines, and desired them to take good care of these men and take them to Red Lake as soon as possible, in case Mr. Adhemar should want them, or be anxious about them, as they have now been absent a long time without his hearing.

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(1) This is all that could be found of this journal.





MR. PETER GRANT

THE

SAUTEUX INDIANS

ABOUT 1804





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Extent of the Saulteux Country.—The climate and productions.—Animals.—Lakes and rivers ; mode of navigation.—The Canadian *Voyageurs*.

## II

The Natives ; their personal appearance and dress.—Their ideas of love and courtship.—Marriages.—Polygamy.—Care and education of children.—Infants' dress.—Parental love.—Their notions of politeness.—Their passions.

## III

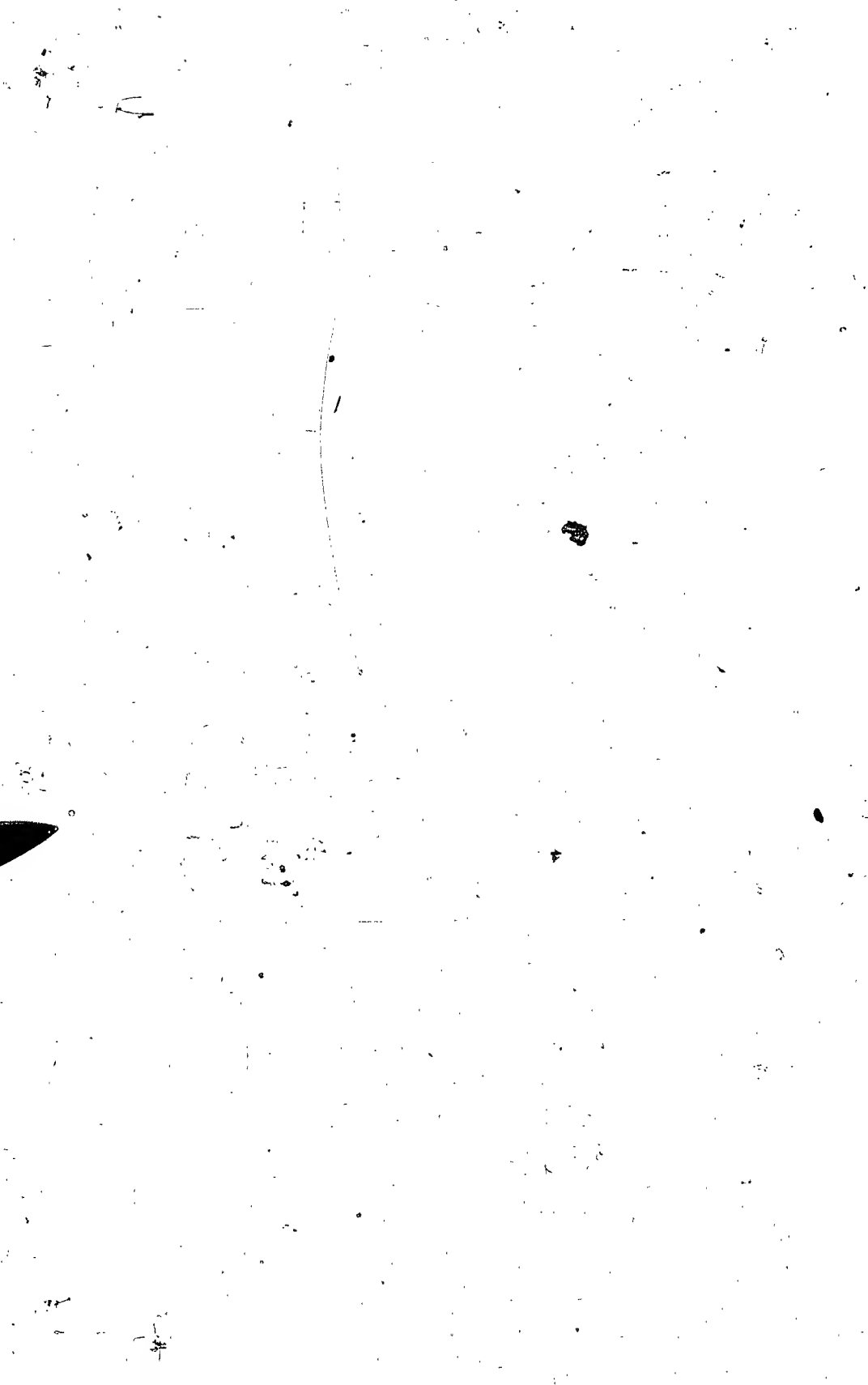
Habitations and food.—Weapons.—Music and musical instruments.—Poetry ; *Kahgameg* and *Asiniboiness*.—Dances ; the "war dance," the "grand calumet dance."—The "hurdle," *la crosse*.—Games peculiar to women.—The games of "bones" and "sticks."

## IV

Hunting : details about the moose, beaver and bear hunts.—Sturgeon fishing.—War with the Sioux, their traditional enemy.—Origin of the war.—Migration of the Indian races to the West.—Modes of warfare.—Government.—Language.—Kalendar.

## V

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MR PETER GRANT (1)

THE

## SAUTEUX INDIANS

Extent of the Saulteux Country.—The climate and productions.—Animals.—Lakes and rivers; mode of navigation.—The Canadian *Voyageurs*.

The immense territories possessed, at present, by the different tribes of *Saulteux* in the North-West extend from *Sault Ste Marie*, in a north-west course, to *Lac Ouinipique*, a computed tract of about 1770 miles, bounded, on the north-east, by Nipigon and

Extent of  
the Saulteux  
country.

(1) Mr. Peter Grant engaged in the fur trade when still very young, and was admitted in the North-West Company, as a clerk, at its beginning, in 1784. In 1791, he had already attained the object of his ambition, a seat at the board as Partner, and was given charge of the important post of *Lac la Pluie* and, afterwards, the superintendance of the Red River department, in which he passed most of the years he spent in the North-West.

His sketch of the Saulteux Indians, the most complete and elaborate of all those furnished to Mr. Roderic MacKenzie, proves him to have been a man of considerable attainments, a good writer and one of the keenest observers which the North-West Company had among its members.

Mr. Grant, on leaving the North-West, settled at Ste Anne, Bout de l'Île, and afterwards removed to Lachine, where he died, in 1848, at the grand old age of eighty-four.—Rev. Robert Campbell, "History of the St Gabriel street church."

the limits of Hudson's Bay, on the south-west, by the south side of Lake Superior, in a line to the head of the Mississippi, from thence, in a westerly course, to the Red River, at about one hundred and fifty miles from where it empties in *Lac Ouinipique*. The frequent emigration of several of their tribes to the country of Assiniboines and Crees make it difficult to ascertain the real boundaries of their present possessions.

Though no people are more attached to their native soil, yet the abundance of game, the ease and facility with which they live and procure the friendship of those nations, who are remarkable for the gentleness of their manners, are powerful motives for many of the *Sauteux* families to settle among them, preferring those fruitful countries to their own, yet too tenacious to the customs of their own nation to conform to the manners of the others.

Their population may be reckoned to about six thousand souls, spread over this vast tract of country.

The  
climate.

Though the winter months are excessively cold, yet the air is very salubrious; the winter generally begins about the end of October, and the navigation opens about the middle of May. On Lake Superior and the other large lakes, thick fogs are very prevalent in the summer months, but never attended with any pernicious consequences to the Natives. The heat in summer, though great, is generally accompanied with refreshing breezes, especially near the borders of their lakes and rivers, and, were it not for the swarms of musquitoes and other troublesome insects which infest the low land and swamps, the summer months in this country would be as pleasant as in any part of the world. During a residence of 18 years in this country, I have never seen above three feet of snow, and many winters, not more than a foot.

The country abounds with rocky, barren mountains, especially near the large lakes, but in the valleys and flat ground, which are not of any considerable extent, the soil is rich, generally of a clayey or sandy bottom, with a thin strata of fine black loam, half a foot thick, on the surface.

Face a the country.

The trees peculiar to those valleys are : maple, poplar, *plaine*, birch, oak and white fir : some parts of the low lands abound in swamps, which produce cedar and different species of willows which furnish the Natives with materials for their canoes ; the willow serves also as food for the moose deer, an animal which delights in those swamps.

Fruits.

The fruit found in this country are: the wild plum, a small sort of wild cherry, wild currants of different kinds, gooseberries, strawberries, raspberries, brambleberries, blackberries, chokecherries, wild grapes, sand cherries, a delicious fruit which grows on a small shrub near sandy shores, and another blueberry, a fine fruit not larger than a currant, tasting much like a pear and growing on a small tree about the size of a willow. In the swamps, you find two kinds of cranberries. Hazle-nuts, but of a very inferior quality, grow near the banks of the rivers and lakes.

A kind of wild rice grows spontaneously and in abundance in most of their small muddy creeks and bays. This wholesome grain is of infinite use to the Natives, being an excellent food when boiled with a little fat, fish, sugar or any kind of meat, and, as it costs them nothing but gathering and husking, which is a very simple process, they never fail to lay by large quantities of it for the consumption of the year.

(1) Quadrupeds and birds.

(1) To avoid repetitions, see : D. Cameron, " The Nipigon Country."

Though few countries can boast of a greater variety of the feathered tribes than the wilds of the North-West during the summer months, yet the return of spring is not, there, welcomed with the harmonious tones which make the delight of the groves of countries where the variety is not so great, but the superior beauty of their plumage, in a manner, makes up for this deficiency.

Insects,  
reptiles  
and fishes.

Among the various swarms of insects which are found in this country, the musketoos, sand flies and another sort of black flies, are particularly troublesome to the Natives; their swarms will often drive the deer from the wood to the borders of the lakes, where they find relief by the breeze and by plunging in the water. They have, moreover, the wasp, bee, ant and spiders of the venemous kind, but whose sting is scarcely felt; the other various insects, such as butterflies, common flies, horse flies are innumerable.

Their reptiles are: the common garter snake, water snake, lizards, leeches, toads and frogs, all very inoffensive; turtles of different species, from one pound weight to twenty pounds, which the Natives never eat, except in time of scarcity, although the meat is good.

The principal fishes are: sturgeon, cat-fish, whitefish, trout, pike, pickerel, carp, a kind of fresh water herring (1), tullibee, *Malachigan* (2) &c.; the *picanon* is a large fish, about 15lb weight, remarkable for its oily quality, and peculiar to Red Lake, about 100 miles west from *Lac La Pluie*. It was never known in any other part of the country, tho', I am told, it is common in the upper part of the Mississippi. This fish is only fit to eat, roasted,

(1) The gold eyed herring, so named on account of its large yellow eyes, and called by the French Canadians, *laquaiche*.

(2) Sheep's head.

but the head, when boiled, is considered a delicacy by the Indians.

There is probably no part of the globe which can boast of so many noble reservoirs of fresh water as this country. From Lake Superior to Lake Ouinipique, the two largest lakes, there is a chain of fifteen considerable ones, besides others of less note, and into which several noble rivers fall. The River of *Lac la Pluie* is one of the finest imaginable; it takes its rise from the lake of that name and, near its source, makes a beautiful fall of forty to fifty feet perpendicular, and about 200 yards long. Except in two places, about its middle, it flows smoothly for one hundred miles, until it empties itself in *Lac du Bois*. Its course runs N. W. through a flat country, which could be cultivated to advantage; Indian corn, melons, cucumbers and all our garden vegetables thrive to perfection in its vicinity. It abounds with sturgeon and various kinds of fish, to which the Natives have recourse in time of scarcity.

The river Ouinipique is about 300 miles long from its rise, at *Lac du Bois*, to its mouth, in *Lac Ouinipique*; it is remarkable, both for the irregularity of its course and its rapidity, widening in some places in immense bays, interspersed with innumerable islands, and in other parts, contracting into small channels, where the rapidity of the waters is really picturesque, falling in tremendous cascades like a flight of stairs which in some places appear for a mile in length like a continual foaming sheet of water. It flows through a barren, mountainous and rocky country which scarcely yields any thing but cedar and pine.

Though, as I have said, no country can boast of larger reservoirs of fresh water than the *Sauteux* country, yet, innumerable shoals and rapids greatly impede the navigation in the interior country, and, except on large lakes, it would be almost impracticable.



cable with boats or any wooden craft. Their birch canoes are, therefore, most ingeniously adapted for this purpose; being composed of light materials, they are easily carried over the portages, and have sufficient strength to resist the greatest swell and carry as heavy loads as any wooden craft of the same dimensions. They have them of different sizes, from those to carry 12 men, generally used by the tribes that live on Lake Superior, to others which only contain two or three men, and even only one, used by the tribes in the interior.

From that noble fall of *Ste Marie*, by the route which commonly leads in the North-West, to *Lac Ouinipique*, there are many beautiful rapids and falls which deserve notice. On the River *des tourtes*, to which the great carrying place of the Grand Portage leads from Lake Superior, there is a really picturesque succession of falls for upwards of nine miles; the last of them, called "The Partridge Fall," tumbles over a shelved rock of over 100 perpendicular feet, and though the body of water is not considerable, yet, in the spring, when the melting snows of the north swell o'er the banks of the river, the view is most beautiful and even sublimely romantic.

There is on the Kaministiquiya, near the North-West Company's new establishment, a tremendous fall, little inferior in height to the famous Fall of Niagara. This, likewise, falls from a smooth shelved rock in a perpendicular sheet for some hundred feet, until it foams in the contracted bed of the river below, forming a continual cloud of rain which moistens the surrounding plants for several acres, and, when the sun shines, a perfect rainbow is seen at a great distance below.

Besides these, many others of less magnitude are found on the communication to *Lac Ouinipique*. In this distance, which the *Voyageurs* compute to be 292 leagues from lake Superior, (1)

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(1) This includes the windings of the rivers.

there are 60 portages over which they carry their canoes, forming in all about 20 miles.

To form an idea of the bold and singular navigation of those romantic waters, we must, in preference, follow the Canadian Voyageur, because the Natives, having very small canoes and being never encumbered with any considerable baggage, seldom require to land in the middle of the most dangerous rapids; they may, moreover, carry their small canoes through bushes and over rocks with comparative ease, where it would be impossible for the traders to clear a tract for the transportation of their large canoes and goods.

The North-West Company's canoes, manned with five men, carry about 3,000lb; they seldom draw more than eighteen inches of water and go, generally, at the rate of six miles an hour, in calm weather. When arrived at a portage, the bowman instantly jumps in the water, to prevent the canoe from touching the bottom, while the others tie their slings to the packages in the canoe and swing them on their backs to carry over the portage. The bowman and the steersman carry their canoe, a duty from which the middlemen are exempt. The whole is conducted with astonishing expedition, a necessary consequence of the enthusiasm which always attends their long and perilous voyages.

It is pleasing to see them, when the weather is calm and serene, paddling in their canoes, singing in chorus their simple melodious strains and keeping exact time with their paddles, which effectually beguiles their labours. When they arrive at a rapid, the guide or foreman's business is to explore the waters previous to their running down with their canoes, and, according to the height of the water, they either lighten the canoe by taking out part of the cargo and carry it over land, or run down the whole load.

It would be astonishing to an European observer to witness the dexterity with which they manage their canoes in those dangerous rapids, carrying them down like lightening on the surface of the water. The bowman, supported by the steersman, dexterously avoids the stones and shoals which might touch the canoe and dash it to pieces, to the almost certain destruction of all on board. It often baffles their skill, when the water is very high, to avoid plunging in foaming swells on the very brink of the most tremendous precipices, yet, those bold adventurers rather run this risk, for the sake of expedition, than lose a few hours by transporting the cargo over land.

When they are obliged to stem the current in strong rapids, they haul up the canoe with a line, all hands pulling along shore and sometimes wading through the water up to their middle, except one man, who remains in the stern of the canoe, in order to keep it in the proper channel; this part of their duty is always accompanied with much labour. When the wind favors, they always carry sail, and in a fresh gale, will generally go 8 or 9 miles an hour.

The Natives, their personal appearance and dress.—Their ideas of love and courtship.—Marriages.—Polygamy.—Care and education of children.—Infants' dress.—Parental love.—Hospitality.—Their notions of politeness.—Their passions.

The *Sauteux* are, in general, of the common stature, well proportioned, though inclining to a slender make, which would indicate more agility than strength. Their complexion is a whitish cast of the copper colour, their hair black, long, straight and of a very strong texture, the point of the nose rather flat, and a certain fulness in the lips, but not sufficient to spoil the appearance of the mouth. The teeth, of a beautiful ivory white, are regular, well set, and seldom fail them, even in the most advanced period of life: their cheeks are high and rather prominent, their eyes black and lively, their countenance is generally pleasant, and the symmetry of their features is such as to constitute what can be called handsome faces.

The Natives; their personal appearance.

The men are bold, manly and graceful in their gait, always carrying their bodies erect and easy; the women on the contrary, by walking with the toes of their feet inclining inwards, have a disagreeable, stiff and lame appearance, though in other respects they might claim some pretensions to beauty. They have a softness and delicacy in their countenance which rival the charms of some of our more civilized and accomplished belles.

Though no people take more pride in a fine head of hair, yet, such is their aversion to beards or hair on other parts of the

body, that they take particular care to pluck them out by the root as soon as they appear ; they may sometimes, in consequence of a dream or religious vow, allow a thin lock to grow about the lips or chin.

They perforate their ears in their infancy and extend them to an unnatural size by suspending lead or any other heavy metal from the outer rim, which, in time, brings them down near the shoulder : this is reckoned very decent and becoming for the men, and particular care is, therefore, taken to have them suitably ornamented. Brass wire is in much repute for this purpose ; the whole rim of the ear is encircled with this wire, which projects out from the side of the head like an arch and from which hang various ornaments of different forms ; the most fashionable are made of silver, resembling a wheel and rather larger than a Spanish dollar. They wear silver bracelets, either on the naked arm or over the sleeve of the coat. The ornaments for the nose hang down about half an inch, and nearly touch the upper lip. They put great value on wampum beads and wear several strings of them about the neck, or suspended from the hair and ears.

They are not confined to any particular mode in wearing the hair ; some allow it to fall negligently about the neck and shoulders, others crop it very close around the head and leave only a small tuft from the crown to the back part, which they tie up in a small club. The young men allow several long locks to fall down over the face, ornamented with ribands, silver broaches, &c. ; they gather up another lock from behind the head into a small club wrapped up with very thin plates of silver, in which they fix the tail feathers of the eagle, or any other favorite bird. None but such who have distinguished themselves in war can presume to wear the tail feathers of the *Kiniew* ; this

bird is of the eagle kind, very scarce and held in great esteem as a bird of war; its tail feathers not only distinguish the hero from the vulgar, but, likewise, represents the number of enemies slain in battle.

In common with the generality of uncivilized nations, they are passionately fond of painting their faces and bodies; the ingredients for this purpose are vermilion, white and blue clay, charcoal or soot, mixed with a little grease or water. With the clay, they daub the body, legs and thighs in rude bars and patches, without the least regard to neatness, whereas the greatest degree of fancy and taste is reserved for painting the face, in which the red and black is sure to predominate.

They esteem painting such an essential ornament in dress that, without it, they reckon themselves *en deshabilité*, should their dress be ever so complete and elegant in other respects; old men, however, can dispense with the formalities of dress, unless on very particular occasions. They have also the habit of puncturing their skin, on different parts of the body, in various figures representing the sun, stars, eagles, serpents, &c., in the choice of which they are generally led by the virtue of some extraordinary dream.

The dress of the men consists of a molton capot, or coat, in the Canadian fashion, which comes down to the knees; a gun screw or a small peg of wood is sufficient to fasten it about the breast and serves in place of buttons; they tighten it around the body with a worsted belt, in which the *cassetéte* and knife are occasionally worn. For breech clout, they pass a narrow slip of bleu cloth between the thighs and fix it on by means of a string, curiously ornamented with the joint bone of a swan's wing, which they tie around the naked waist; the ends of the breech clout fall down behind and before for modesty sake.

The leggins are made of moltons, strouds, or scarlet cloth, without any particular regard to the shape of the leg, but a narrow wing, or border, projects the whole length of the outside of the leggin and curves about the ankle into the shoe. This border is garnished with gartering riband and beads, and is fixed by means of tape to the breech clout string above the *hanches* and secured below the knee with garters.

Over the whole, they wear a white blanket, with which they wrap the body from the shoulders down to the ankles.

Their shoes are made of the dressed skin of the moose or reindeer; those used for travelling are made large, to admit thick socks, and without any regard to neatness, but on other occasions they have them made exactly to the foot, elegantly embroidered with porcupine quills of various colours.

In winter, they wear a cloth cape, resembling a turban, but in other seasons, they generally go bareheaded, except a few "bucks", who wear a piece of the skin of an otter, or of some other favorite animal, wrapped around the head, merely as an ornament, or out of some religious whim.

Their intercourse with us has given them such an idea of the value of silver, that nothing in their estimation is so valuable and so becoming to set off their persons as trinkets made of that metal.

Women's  
dress.

The women wear petticoats of blue cloth, which come down to the ankle, and cover their bodies upwards to the pit of the shoulder with the same stuff. Their sleeves, made of red or blue molton, come down near the wrist and open along the inside of the arm; they tie them by the uppermost corner behind the shoulders, so that the lower corners, which fall down behind, cover a considerable part of the back. A narrow slip of cloth is fixed across the breast, from the end of which two other slips

are suspended, carefully ornamented with white beads and various other trinkets.

They wear silver bracelets on their wrists, rings on their fingers, beads about the neck and a profusion of silver crosses and others ornaments dangling down upon the breast. Their ear and nose ornaments are the same as the men's, though not in the same profusion; their ears are not distorted to such an unnatural size, nor encumbered with silver wheels and brass wire. Their blankets are a size smaller than the men's, but worn in the same manner and tightened with garters below the knee.

In painting, they use no other ingredients but vermilion and charcoal, the red is confined to a small spot on each cheek, the roots of the hair and, sometimes, around the eyes. They are very careful of their hair, anointing it with bear's oil, which gives it a smooth and glossy appearance, and makes it grow very fast. They divide it with a comb from the forehead to the crown in a straight line, and gather it behind the head into a cylindrical club, about six inches long, wrapped up with any dirty rag, over which it is tied very tight with a piece of tape, quite close to the head, which arrangement gives it a very stiff and awkward appearance.

They are not insensible to the charms of love, though, indeed, not so subject to its empire as the Europeans are in general. Here, the disappointed lover can bear the indifference of his mistress with the calmest fortitude. In their courtship, they are perfect strangers to that refinement of flattery which so often prevails in our amours, and nothing, in their opinion, can be more derogatory to the character of a man than an abject adulation towards the fair sex.

Their manner of making love is not only singular, but rude and indecent, according to our ideas of good breeding. The

Their ideas  
of love and  
courtship.



lover begins his first addresses by gently pelting his mistress with bits of clay, snow balls, small sticks, or any thing he may happen to have in his hand: if she returns the compliment, he is encouraged to continue the farce and repeat it for a considerable time. After these preliminaries, some significant smiles and witticisms are exchanged, but of such a nature as would make our more delicate fair ones blush. Matters being thus far advanced, the happy lover is persuaded that his addresses are agreeable, and that nothing more is wanted but the consent of the parents, which, to a good hunter or warrior, is seldom denied. He then makes them a considerable present, which, if accepted, becomes his permission to sleep with his mistress and keep her as his wife.

The marriage is so far consummated without further ceremony, but, to make it binding, it is necessary that he should live at least one winter with his father-in-law, during which the old man claims an undisputed right to all the produce of his hunt; but so soon as the young couple have a child of their own, they are released from any further dependence on the old people, and are at liberty to go and live where they please.

Polygamy.

Though the generality are content with one wife, yet, polygamy is encouraged among them, and a good hunter has commonly two or three. *Kakegameg*, the late chief of *Lac Lapluie*, had not less than five wives. Notwithstanding the incessant toil and care which necessarily attend the maintenance of a large family, especially in such barren and miserable country as these people inhabit, they have the most powerful reasons to keep as many wives as they can possibly support. Their consequence and respectability in society are generally esteemed according to the nature of their alliances and the number of their children. The first wife, however, claims a certain superiority over the others, and

is generally considered by the husband as chief mistress of the family.

Though they seem to live in perfect harmony together in the presence of their husband, it may, however, be very reasonably supposed that they have their jealousies and family broils; such misunderstandings can scarcely be avoided when the husband has a favorite among his wives. He never interferes in women's quarrels, unless he is personally attacked by any of them; in that case, he knows of a decisive argument to settle the dispute, which is nothing more nor less than a sound beating to the unfortunate delinquent, with a stick, an axe, or any other thing which he may happen to have in his hand.

It is customary with them to marry young, their roving way of life would, indeed, seem to make it a necessity. A *Sauteux* cannot, with any degree of comfort, support the fatigues of the chase without a female companion to make and mend his shoes, scrape the skins, carry home the meat, pitch the tent and cook the victuals, with many other domestic concerns which necessarily fall to their lot with all the drudgery and most laborious part of the work, while his province is principally confined to hunting and fishing; yet, those women, for all their work and devotion, are regarded by the men little better than slaves to their will, or mere beasts of burden for their conveniency.

They are not, however, without their Xanthippes, who, equal to the most celebrated heroines of the ancients and moderns, can assert the rights of their sex, with a vengeance.

When the parties cannot agree, the marriage is dissolved by mutual consent, and each is at liberty to form new connexions with whom they please and when they please, without consulting any one, the public never concern themselves with matters of this nature.

Women in  
childbed

When a woman is in labour, a small temporary shade is erected for her use, and every thing necessary for her accommodation is carefully placed within her reach. They have no professional midwives, but every matron who had children of her own is supposed to be equal to the task, and is always provided with proper medicines for the circumstance. Nature has providently endowed these poor women with such robust and healthy constitutions as to render the aid of the midwife, in most cases, unnecessary. I have known instances of some of them, labouring hard and carrying burdens on their backs all day, safely delivered next morning without the aid of any one, and yet enjoying sufficient strength and vigour to enable them to pursue their ordinary occupations.

Parental  
affection

There are not, perhaps, greater demonstrations of joy at the birth of the first heir in England than is testified in the humble dwelling of a *Sauteux* when a male child is born. Not only the parents and relations, but also the whole village, seem equally interested, especially the women, who immediately crowd to see the young stranger. One of these officious gossips first announces the sex and quality of the child to the father, and then invites him to come and see it. He is probably the only person present who seems apparently indifferent, but amply testifies his joy by his liberal presents to the midwife, or person who procured the necessary medicines.

The in-  
fant's  
dress.

The infant is immediately swaddled in a small blanket, or in any other warm stuff which may happen to be at hand, but never washed in water, as is customary with us. A piece of cloth is previously made in a proper form to receive a small pillow, on which the child is laid and dressed, having first a little dry moss, or rotten wood finely pounded, carefully applied between the thighs and feet, which keeps the child remarkably easy and clean.

It is dressed in this manner until it attains the age of a month The cradle. or so, when a very convenient sort of portable cradle is prepared, in which it is dressed in the day time and carried about from place to place on their backs.

This piece of furniture consists of a smooth thin board, about 2½ feet by 18 inches, on which a narrow piece of thin wood is fixed edgeways and bended in the form of an elliptical arch, forming a cavity sufficient to contain a blanket and a pillow on which the child is laid and dressed. Another piece of thin wood projects from the upper end of the board, directly over the infant's head; this is bent in the form of the broad end of a heart, and fixed to the cradle by means of a small bar across the back part of the board. Besides being useful for handling the cradle about, it, likewise, serves to support a handkerchief, or any other light stuff, which they fix upon it, occasionally, as a curtain to screen the child from the air and flies.

The infant is perfectly secured in this cradle by means of two long bandages of cloth fixed to the sides, and garnished with a considerable degree of taste. Two others slips of curious workmanship fall from this projected arch at top, which gives the whole a very neat and elegant appearance. Secured in this manner, the women carry them on their backs, whether on a journey or when engaged in their ordinary out door work, without the least inconvenience to themselves or to their tender charge.

They seldom wean their young ones before the age of three Parental or four years; unless they happen to have another in the inter- love. val; this no doubt proceeds from their uncommon tenderness and affection towards their children. I have always observed that any particular kindness conferred on these young favorites never fails to ensure the affection of the parents, and, on the con-

trary, should any one abuse their children, it would most certainly lead to a sullen hatred which would never be forgotten.

Education  
of boys.

As soon as boys begin to run about, they are provided with bows and arrows, and acquire, as it were "by instinct," an astonishing dexterity in shooting birds, squirrels, butterflies, &c. Hunting in miniature may be justly said to comprise the whole of their education and childish diversion. Such as excel in this kind of exercise are sure of being particularly distinguished by their parents and seldom punished for any misbehaviour, but, on the contrary, indulged in every degree of excess and caprice. I have often seen grown up boys of this description, when punished for some serious fault, strike their father and spit in his face, calling him "*bad dog*" or "*old woman*," and, sometimes, carrying their insolence so far as to threaten to stab or shoot him, and, what is rather singular, these too indulgent parents seem to encourage such unnatural liberties, and even glory in such conduct from their favorite children. I heard them boast of having sons who promised at an early age to inherit such bold and independant sentiments.

The feast of  
"naming  
the child."

When a name his to be given a child, a respectable person is invited to officiate as priest; the whole ceremony consists in a speech, a few songs, and a feast, to which all the friends are invited (1). It is remarkable that if the infant is uncommonly cross and fretful after the ceremony, they seriously imagine that it is displeased with the name and, of course, find it necessary to give it another.

They have many other superstitious notions, equally absurd, respecting children; for instance, they say that when an infant smiles and looks steadfastly at its fist, it indicates death, or some

(1) For the details of the ceremony, see: D. Cameron "The Nipigon country."

serious accident to it, and, when apparently in good health, if it is restless at night and not inclined to sleep as usual, they expect to see strangers soon or hear of some very important news.

Children of nine or ten years of age not only enjoy the confidence of the men, but are generally considered as companions and very deliberately join in their conversations.

No people assume more merit or consequence from the virtues <sup>Indian</sup> or warlike exploits of their ancestors. Though they acknowledge the superiority of our arts and manufactures, and their own incapacity to imitate us, yet, as a people, they think us far inferior to themselves. They pity our want of skill in hunting and our incapacity of travelling through their immense forests without guides or food. <sup>pride.</sup>

Having but a very imperfect idea of all the necessaries required in civilized life, they impute our commercial intercourse with them to our sordid avarice, or the miserable poverty of our own country. Like some of the Natives of the Pacific Ocean, they really imagine that we frequent their country merely to fill our bellies. The highest compliments which they bestow on a white man is that he is in every respect like one of themselves, but no one can aspire to that honor who has not a tolerable knowledge of their language and customs.

They regard our books and writings with some degree of veneration, and, allow their possessors to have some merit and, sometimes, condescend to honor them with the appellation of "Chief" or "Father".

These haughty people, though uncommonly reserved among themselves, are, with their traders, the meanest beggars and most abject flatterers on earth, and, though naturally honest in their dealing with one another, they often find many occasion to cheat their traders with impunity. Grave and serious, even in

their amusements, they speak little, but always to the purpose, observing the greatest circumspection in their most trivial concerns.

Their hospitality.

Hospitality with them is not merely confined to strangers, but equally conferred on every person who may require their assistance. When several families live together, provisions are often distributed in common, except such portion as are reserved for the traders or for some other particular purpose. It matters not who has killed the game; provided there is meat in the camp, all who choose to fetch a load for their families are welcome, and it very often happens that the hunter finds himself with the smallest share, yet, he enjoys no small degree of pride for having it in his power to satisfy so many friends. As they are naturally generous and liberal in their dispositions, they regard avaricious characters, liars, thieves and slanderers with the greatest contempt.

Abuse of liquor

See: D. Cameron, "The Nipigon country".

Their game laws

It is customary with them, in the beginning of winter, to separate in single families, a precaution which seems necessary to their very existence, and of which they are so sensible that when one of them has chosen a particular district for his hunting ground, no other person will encroach upon it without a special invitation, and whoever discovers a beaver lodge and marks its situation may consider it his undoubted property, and no other person will attempt to destroy it without his permission. In case of famine, however, any one may abandon his district and seek a better hunt on his neighbour's land without incurring the least ill will or reproach: they say: "the lands were made for the use of man, therefore, every one has an equal right to partake of the produce."

In their migrations, they go by short stages, and are never very particular in the choice of grounds for their encampments,

provided they have plenty of wood and water, they find themselves equally well, whether in the thickest wood or in the plains.

When the men are not employed in the indispensable duties of hunting and fishing, their time is generally taken up with smoking, singing and beating of the drum, or in making pipe stems, wooden bowls, snowshoe frames, drums, rattles and the like. Though no people have a greater aversion to hard labour, they by no means encourage idleness, especially with the women; these poor drudges, though burdened with the care and nursing of the children, are never exempt from the hardest work, while their husbands very deliberately smoke their pipes and look on with the greatest indifference. <sup>Their occupation</sup>

Their wants are very few, they can the more easily part with their superfluities and put less value on property; this they have in common with most savage nations, whose general notions about property vary according to their local circumstances and degree of civilization.

The women have the very singular habit, when in the action of freeing their bodies from lice, of taking the vermin very deliberately with their fingers and conveying them between the teeth, when, after being carefully squashed, they are either swallowed or thrown out with the saliva. This disgusting custom proceeds from a ridiculous notion that, should the vermin be destroyed in any other manner, they would likely find their way back again and feed in their former places. This custom is, moreover, so far from being considered unbecoming, that in some of their public meetings, the women perform this necessary office to their husbands and children with the greatest imaginable indifference.

Such is their notions of politeness that they seldom give a square refusal to any favor that is required from them; <sup>Their notions of politeness.</sup>



should they not be inclined to oblige, they know perfectly well how to give a plausible reason for their refusal.

To call one of them directly by his name is considered very impertinent, except among intimates and relations; if you ask a bystander his name, he may probably not be affronted, but you need not expect a direct answer, and recourse must be had to some other person present, who makes no difficulty to satisfy you. But if the person whose name you require happens to be within hearing, your informer satisfies your curiosity in a low whisper.

Their manner of salutation is most ridiculous: when strangers or long absent friends meet, they remain like statues for a considerable time, with their faces hid or inclined to one side and without exchanging one word. After a long pause, they smile or grin at each other, this is understood to be the prelude to asking news, and the conversation becomes general after they have smoked a pipe.

I never could meet any of them who could exactly tell his own age; this, indeed, is a very singular circumstance in a people whose intellectual faculties are by no means contemptible.

Their pas-  
sions.

Their passions, whether of a benevolent or mischievous tendency, are always more violent than ours. I believe this has been found to be the case with all barbarous nations, who never cultivate the mind; hence proceed the cruelties imputed to savages, in general, towards their enemies. Though these people cannot be acquitted from some degree of that ferocious barbarity which characterizes the savages, they are, however, free from that deliberate cruelty which has been so often imputed to other barbarous nations. They are content to kill and scalp their enemy, and never reserve a prisoner for the refined torments of a lingering and cruel death.

### III

Habitations and food.—Weapons.—Music and musical instruments.—Poetry. *Kakegameg* and *Asiniboiness*.—Dances; the “*wan* dance”; the “grand calumet dance.”—The “hurdle.”—Games peculiar to women.—The games of “bones” and of “sticks.”

Their tents are constructed with slender long poles, erected in the form of a cone and covered with the rind of the birch tree. The general diameter of the base is about fifteen feet, the fire place exactly in the middle, and the remainder of the area, with the exception of a small place for the hearth, is carefully covered with the branches of the pine or cedar tree, over which some bear skins and old blankets are spread, for sitting and sleeping. A small aperture is left in which a bear skin is hung in lieu of a door, and a space is left opened at the top, which answers the purpose of window and chimney. In stormy weather, the smoke would be intolerable, but this inconvenience is easily removed by contracting or shifting the aperture at top according to the point from which the wind blows. It is impossible to walk, or even to stand upright, in their miserable habitations, except directly around the fire place. The men sit generally with their legs stretched before them, but the women have theirs folded backwards, inclined a little to the left side, and can comfortably remain the whole day in those attitudes, when the weather is too bad for remaining out of doors. In fine weather, they are very fond of basking in the sun.

When the family is very large, or when several families live together, the dimensions of their tents are, of course, in proportion and of different forms. Some of those spacious habitations resemble the roof of a barn, with small openings at each end for doors, and the whole length of the ridge is left uncovered at top for the smoke and light. The master and mistress take possession of the bottom of the tent, right opposite the door, furniture and provisions are piled up without order near the mistress's place.

**Their food.** In the spring, when the hunting season is over, they generally assemble in small villages, either at the trader's establishment, or in places where fish or wild fowl abound; sturgeon and white fish are most common, though they have abundance of pike, trout, suckers, and pickerel. They sometimes have the precaution to preserve some for the summer consumption, this is done by opening and cleaning the fish and then carefully drying it in the smoke or sun, after which it is tied up very tight in large parcels, wrapped up in bark and kept for use; their meat, in summer, is cured in the same manner.

This is found a very necessary precaution in case of famine, which they too often experience, especially in those parts of the country where moose deer are scarce, as the meat of this animal and that of the reindeer and bear constitute the greater part of their food. When they have it in great plenty, the most of their time is taken up in continual feasting, to which the whole village assists, and of which the dogs and children devour no inconsiderable part. By this conduct, large quantities are wasted in a few days, which, by a little economy, might be sufficient to maintain their families for the greatest part of the winter, but their notions of economy are generally confined to the present moment, and they have seldom any care to provide for the future.

In times of scarcity, the inmost fibres of the bark of the pine tree and a kind of weed which grows on rocks serve them as food, and, strange to say, even the dung of the reindeer is esteemed as a delicate dish by some of them. I have tasted it, out of curiosity, but thought it not deserving the encomium which they bestow upon it. In the state they eat it, it is of a dull green colour, of a peculiar sweatish taste, but of a nutritive quality, when mixed with other food.

Their meat is either boiled in a kettle, or roasted by means of a sharp stick, fixed in the ground at a convenient distance from the fire, and on which the meat is fixed and turned occasionally towards the fire, until the whole is thoroughly done; their fish is dressed in the same manner.

Their favorite drink, in the winter time, is hot broth poured over a dishful of pure snow. It has the peculiar advantage, by reason of the gradual dissolution of the snow, of being drank at any degree of heat or cold which is most agreeable. I have always found it wholesome and pleasant drink.

They observe no regular times in their meals, but, like wild animals eat with the most voracious appetite at all hours of the day and night; they can, however, abstain from food for many days together with a degree of indifference and good humour incredible to an European.

They never sit down to a social meal, except at public feasts; the men, women and children eat their share, and each individual is helped with his portion in a separate dish; the master of the house is first served, unless there happens to be a stranger present, a character they always respect, and for whom the first place and the choice bits are always reserved, the mistress keeps a reserve in the kettle for herself and rest of family.

See: D. Cameron, "The Nipigon Country."

Women's  
Creations

Their culinary utensils consist of a few kettles, wooden bowls and spoons made of maple or birch, dishes made of birch rind and ornamented about the edge with painted quills. They have bags and pouches of various sorts, some made of worsted, in which their medicines and most valuable effects are kept, others made of the skins of otters, beavers, fishers, or other favorite animals; some of those are elegantly garnished, and consecrated to religious or conjuring matters, others, of less importance, contain their tobacco and pipes, &c.

Weapons,  
&c.

Besides the *casse-tête*, knife and gun, they wear a kind of a short broad dagger. In war, they use the *pocomagan*, a very destructive weapon; it consists of a piece of wood, a foot and a half long, curved at one end, with a big heavy knob, in which is fixed a piece of long sharp iron; they have lances, six or seven feet long, but seldom or never make use of them.

Their fishing taklings are: nets, lines, *seines* and iron spears fixed into a very straight and smooth pole of 12 or 15 feet long. The ice chisel or trench serves to pierce the ice in winter for setting lines or nets, or for working the beaver. The remainder of their moveables consists in axes, cradles, snow-shoes, sledges and bark canoes, which form the catalogue of the furniture and effects considered as quite sufficient for the most wealthy families among them.

Musical  
instru-  
ments.

No respectable person or head of a family among them would go without his drum. This favorite instrument consists of a piece of hollow tree, having a wooden bottom and the top covered with a piece of thin parchment, on which they perform with a stick having the form of a hammer. They have another sort, of a smaller size and not unlike our military drums, which are generally reserved for important circumstances. Those are

curiously ornamented with various hieroglyphical figures and the down feathers of the swan.

They have rattles made of gourds, or of any piece of hollow wood, in which a few grains of shot or small pebbles are enclosed; this instrument is held in the hand by means of a short handle, and shaken with great dexterity to keep time with their songs and drums at their grand concert. They use another kind of rattle, made of a number of small bones, or the hindmost hoofs of the deer, loosely fixed to the end of a small stick; both sorts of rattles have about the same effect.

Their only musical instruments being the drum and rattle, (unless we include a very simple whistle which they use in war,) it cannot, therefore, be reasonably expected that any thing like our ideas of harmony can be produced with such rude and imperfect instruments. To a perfect stranger, all their music would seem a perfect monotony, but a person a little accustomed to their concerts would soon perceive many varieties of the sublime and solemn kind.

- They seem quite indifferent to our gay and complicated airs, and, though they are fond of seeing a person perform on the violin or german flute, they take more pleasure in observing the elasticity of the hands and fingers of the performer than in the harmony which is produced, but when the tunes are of a serious or melancholy nature, they seem to listen with the greatest attention, and, in conformity to their own ideas of music, they attribute such airs to some warlike or religious subject.

Their drums and rattles are always accompanied with songs, and at some of their grand concerts the women join choruses; their soft shrill voices make a pleasant contrast with the sound of the drum, even the delicate ear of an European would be pleased with such melody.

Poetry.

There is neither rhyme nor measure observed in their poetry; no originality of thought or choice of expression is required, but the mere subject and air constitute the merit of the song: the general topics of which are religious subjects, short narratives of the exploits of their warriors, or praise of the dead. Their "conjurers" or "dreamers," who by their prophesies are supposed to contribute to some warlike exploit, become, likewise, the subject of their songs.

*Kakegameg*  
and  
*Asiniboiness*.

A recent instance of this happened a few years ago at *Lac la-pluie*. *Kakegameg*, the late chief, having formed a war party against the *Scieux*, proceeded with his army near the confines of the enemy's country, but, falling short of provisions, and his army being greatly broken down by fatigue, the greatest part mutinied and insisted on returning to their families, while he, with a few faithful adherents, were determined to continue their route and not return in a shameful manner without attempting to procure a scalp, or, at least, discovering some vestige of the enemy.

While they were in this consultation, *Asiniboiness*, a man who pretended to a considerable degree of skill in dreams and divination, and was at the same time the principal leader of the mutinied party, got up and begged their attention for a moment, then, addressing himself to the chief, began in this manner.

"You do well to prosecute the war with the few brave men who have still vigour enough to attend you; before the sun sets three times you will find the enemy and procure a scalp; but to ensure this success, it is likewise necessary that I and my party should return home, otherwise, many of the young men who are already worn out with fatigue might become easy victims to our enemies. Such is the substance of a dream which I had last night, in which the *Manitou* appeared and strongly impressed these particulars on my mind.

After this speech, both parties seemed satisfied, and matters were regarded in a more propitious light. The chief and his few companions proceeded with confidence and, next day, killed and scalped a *Scioux* whom they discovered robbing a rook's nest on the top of a tree. Highly satisfied with this success, they thought it prudent to return home, and though the cowardly *Asiniboiness* had so shamefully deserted the common cause, yet, by virtue of his pretended prophecies, he acquired equal honor with the chief in the success of the enterprise, and a song was composed on the subject which is still in vogue amongst them, consisting of these words: "Kakegameg and *Asiniboiness* have shot and scalped the yellow *Scioux*".

All their songs are equally simple, seldom exceeding a dozen of words, but the air and manner of singing them is attended with a certain degree of mystery represented in hieroglyphical figures on bits of bark, and never learned or explained to the vulgar without very considerable presents in return.

Their dances may be divided into three different classes: the <sup>Dances.</sup> common dance, in which both sexes join, the "war dance" and "*grand calumet* dance". The first is performed in the following manner: the body is kept a little inclined forward, the feet close together, with the knees bent, the arms and hands quite close to the sides, and the elbows projecting backward. In this posture, they hop in all directions, sometimes on both feet at once, and at other times raising each foot alternately. One or two begin the dance, others soon join, and a motley group of men and women are formed, without any regard to numbers, having neither variety in their steps or figures that deserve the attention of curious spectator. The graceful movements of the body are of little moment, and the chief merit is keeping time to the music by stamping furiously on the ground and swinging their shoulders and their hands close to their bodies.



The "war  
dance."

The "war dance" is a representation of the different manœuvres of discovering, attacking and scalping an enemy. The performer begins with a hanger, *cassette*, or some other offensive weapon, which he flourishes in a variety of threatening attitudes, while dancing; he then hops along for some time, apparently with the greatest caution, and squats down suddenly on his hams behind his weapon. After having feigned the different motions of loading a gun, he levels his piece at his supposed enemy, runs forward and, supposing his victim yet alive, pretends to fall upon him, striking several blows of the *cassette* on his head and finally despatches him by a mortal stab near the heart with his dagger. He then instantly pretends to make a circular incision with his knife around the head to raise the scalp, which he attempts to take with his teeth, after which he gives the whoop and dances around the circle. The whole merit of this performance depends on the dexterity and rapidity of the different movements, though, at the same time, some attention must be given to the measure and cadence of the music.

The Grand  
Calumet  
dance.

The *Grand Calumet* dance is only performed on some extraordinary occasion; in fact, all the northern tribes, especially the *Maskegons* and those about *Lac Lapluie* and River *Quinipic* seem to have entirely neglected it, but the *Pilleurs* and their southerly neighbours take great merit in their superior knowledge of this dance.

The dancer is provided with a rattle in his right hand and a war pipe stem in his left. This stem is curiously ornamented with feathers of different colours, small locks of hair and bits of riband suspended from it at equal distance near the extremity. The tail feathers of the *kiniew* are fixed in such manner as to form a beautiful section of a circle, which falls down, and whose radius forms an acute angle to the end of the stem.

He holds the stem in a horizontal position, keeping exact time with the song and drum, shaking his rattle in every direction, and working himself up by degrees into many strange and uncommon posture, stamping furiously along, with his body sometimes parallel to the ground, twisting himself and turning in an astonishing manner, and, yet, always keeping time with the music. At intervals, he brandishes his stem or rattle towards some spectators in such quick and masterly a manner as would make a mere stranger imagine that he actually wished to devour or swallow him up. The performer finishes by presenting his implements to another person, which is always considered a compliment, and in this manner the dance continues so long as there are parties willing to join.

When assembled in the summer season at the Company's <sup>The</sup> forts, or at any other general rendez-vous, it is customary with <sup>"hurdle"</sup> them, if not occupied with their more serious concerns, to <sup>La crosse.</sup> amuse themselves at different games.

The "hurdle" is their favorite game; not only their young men, but men advanced in life sometimes engage in it. On this occasion they strip naked, save their breech clouts, head dress, a few silver ornaments on their arms and a belt around their waist; their faces and bodies are painted in the highest style. Each man is provided with a hurdle, an instrument made of a small stick of wood about three feet long, bended at the end to a small circle, in which a loose piece of net work is fixed, forming a cavity big enough to receive a leather ball, about the size of a man's fist.

Every thing being prepared, a level plain about half a mile <sup>Rules of</sup> long is chosen, with proper barriers or goals at each end. Having <sup>the game.</sup> previously formed into two equal parties, they assemble in the very middle of the field, and the game begins by throwing up the ball perpendicularly in the air, when, instantly, both

parties form a singular group of naked men, painted in different colors and in the most comical attitudes imaginable, gaping with their hurdles elevated in the air to catch the ball. Such a scene would make a scene worthy of the pencil of a Hogarth or a Poussin.

Whoever is so fortunate as to catch the ball in his hurdle, runs with it towards the barrier with all his might, supported by his party, while his opponents pursue him and endeavour to strike it out.

He who succeeds in doing so, runs in the same manner towards the opposite barrier and is, of course, pursued in his turn. If in danger of being overtaken, he may throw it with his hurdle towards any of his associates who may happen to be nearer the barrier than himself. They have a particular knack of throwing it to a great distance in this manner, so that the best runners have not always the advantage, and, by a peculiar way of working their hands and arms while running, the ball never drops out of their hurdle.

The best of three heats wins the game, and, besides the honor acquired on such occasions, a considerable prize is adjudged to the victors. The vanquished, however, generally challenge their adversaries to renew the game the next day, which is seldom refused. The game then becomes more important, as the honor of the whole village is at stake, and it is carried on with redoubled impetuosity, every object which might impede them in their career is knocked down and trod under foot without mercy, and, before the game is decided, it is a common thing to see numbers sprawling on the ground with wounded legs and broken heads, yet this never creates any disputes or illwill after the play is decided.

Women's  
hurdle."

The women have a game in imitation of the hurdle, in which the men never join. On this occasion, these heroines are pro-

vided with straight poles, about six feet long and pointed at one end, with which they throw two balls joined together by a short link or cord, about four inches long.

The game is begun and continued in the same manner as the hurdle, with the same impetuosity, but, seldom, with the same order and good humour, for it is common for these ladies, before the game is decided, to quarrel and fight with their cudgels in good earnest, and to the no small diversion of the men, who are often spectators of the farce, and take particular pleasure in seeing the women thus embroiled in their play.

They have another game peculiar to women and children and performed in the following manner. Seven or eight small hollow bones of a conical shape are strung on a small cord, six inches long, at the end of which is fixed a piece of leather in imitation of a bird's tail, full of holes and principally meant to keep the bones from slipping off; to the other extremity of the cord is fixed a small sharp pointed pin of wood or bone, by which the instrument is held in the hand.

The game  
of "bones."

The whole art consists in swinging the machine gently with the hand and in such a direction that, in reverting back, one or more of the bones may remain on the point of the pin, the bones being placed so as to fall into one another, as so many funnels, while the instrument is perpendicular. Every bone which happens to remain in this manner on the pin after the swing, counts one towards the game. The tail is difficult to catch, but when caught it is a capital point and generally decides the game in favor of the fortunate holder, as he may count one for every hole in the tail. While a person counts, he keeps possession of the instrument, otherwise, he gives it to the next person, who swings it in his turn as often as he counts a point towards the game.

The game  
of "sticks"

The most simple of all their games is performed with a handful of very small straight sticks, which must always be an odd number; these are divided into two portions, at the discretion of the holder, he takes one in each hand and presents them cross ways to his opponent, who chooses one of the portions, each then counts his share, and he who has the pairs counts one point towards the game and deals out the sticks to the other as long as he counts.

Another game of which they are passionately fond, and in which women may occasionally join, is performed in the following manner: A large wooden dish is provided, in which they put a certain number of thin circular bones or pieces of metal about the size of a common button, having one side stained black and the other side of a bright colour; any number of people may play, by sitting in a circular manner around the dish. The game begins by a person taking hold of the dish in a horizontal position and striking it gently on a blanket previously laid on the floor for the purpose, then, by making the bones or pieces of metal bounce into the air, they fall and settle in the dish, and all which fall their black faces uppermost count towards the game. While the holder counts, he may keep possession of the dish, otherwise, he forfeits his chance and must give it to the next person; in this manner it goes around the circle. The holder at each stroke he gives must repeat a short unintelligible *jargon*, by which he thinks to ensure good luck.

In this manner they cheerfully amuse themselves and, though their games are always interesting, they never encourage them so far as to interfere with their more serious concerns. They can bear the caprice of fortune with an admirable degree of patience and good humour, and are perfect strangers to that sullen black melancholy which, too often, characterizes the generality of our professed gamesters.

Hunting : details about the moose, beaver, bear hunts.—Sturgeon fishing.—War with the Sioux, their traditional enemies.—Origin of the war.—Migration of the Indian races to the West.—Mode of warfare.—Government.—Language.—Kalendar.

The *original*, or moose deer, are seldom found in large droves <sup>Moose</sup> like the elk or buffalo, but are generally scattered in small <sup>hunting</sup> bands, which frequent the thickest wood, and feed upon the tender branches of the willow, birch or poplar. While undisturbed by the hunters, they remain within the narrow circle of a few acres, for a whole season. The size of the animal, its skin and meat, which is of the most excellent quality, make the hunting of it an object of the first consequence with the Natives; it may, indeed, be reckoned their staff of life, and a scarcity of moose in the winter season is sure to cause a very severe famine. It is, therefore, found necessary to become initiated from a very early age to all the precautions and art which that hunt requires.

For this sport, a windy day is chosen, and if the hunter has the good fortune to fall on a fresh track, he is seldom mistaken about the distance at which the animal may be found. As he proceeds, he must carefully keep the wind in his face, because the moose has a most exquisite scent and can smell its pursuers, to windward, at a great distance, in which case it is immediately alarmed and runs so fast for many miles without stopping as to render pursuit entirely fruitless. The hunter, therefore, never follows the track in a direct line when he supposes the animal

near, unless he has the wind directly in his favor, but makes a large circuit until he has reason to suppose the animal to windward; he then advances slowly, taking particular care to tread softly as he proceeds along. The least rotten branch he might break by accident is sufficient to give alarm at the distance of a half a mile, though it is quite indifferent to the cracking of the wood in a storm.

When a fresh track or fresh dung indicates that the animal is near, the hunter often stops short to endeavour to see it; sometimes the ear, a leg or only a small part of the body can be seen through the thick foliage, but this is enough for an expert hunter to make sure of his game, and to know exactly where he is to aim. If the animal is killed, the entrails are immediately taken out, lest the meat should putrify, and a pole is stuck in the ground, with the cover of the hunter's gun or his belt suspended from it, in order to scare away the wolves, crows, or any other animal which might destroy the meat. He takes the tongue and heart home to his tent, and orders the women and children to go next day to fetch the meat.

Beaver  
hunting.

After the moose, the beaver becomes the most favorite object of their chase. They have various methods of taking this animal. In the fall of the year, they take them with traps placed on some beaten track, which these animals frequent while building their habitations, or collecting their winter store. Steel traps are generally set under water, in such places where the animal is accustomed to debark. The most simple method, however, is by destroying these houses, and draining the pond on which they are situated, so that the animals, being alarmed and deprived of the water so necessary to their existence, take immediately to flight and become an easy prey to the hunters, who cautiously watch every avenue through which they might escape. But should the beavers get into any of those numerous

holes or washes which they dig around their habitations, they can often baffle the united efforts, both of dogs and hunters. It is, therefore, necessary, while draining the pond, to find out and stop as many of those holes as possible, so that the beavers, finding no admittance in their stronghold, must roam at large, subject every moment to be discovered by the enemy. Dogs are particularly useful in finding the washes, especially in low, swampy ground, where the most experienced hunter very often cannot succeed.

When the water is clear and undisturbed at the entrance of a wash, it is supposed that the beaver is out, and it is immediately shut up, but if the water appears muddy, or bears marks of having been recently agitated, the hunter concludes that there is a beaver within, and instantly gets to work to force it out, by breaking the ground above the wash, which he finds out by the hollow sound of the ground. In this, great labour and perseverance are required, as they have often to work hard in this manner for several days without killing a single beaver, while, at other times, in a few hours, they kill them in great numbers. The beginning of winter, while the ice is yet thin, is the best time for this kind of hunt, as the entrance of the washes are not yet frozen, and are easily found.

In the spring of the year, when the navigation is free, the beavers leave their houses and roam to considerable distances in quest of fresh food. The Indians avail themselves of these peregrinations and hunt them with the gun, gliding gently down the stream in small canoes, carefully avoiding all noise with their paddles and any thing which might startle them when they appear, at short intervals, on the surface of the water. The beaver is then often shot at a distance of 9 or 10 yards from the canoe and, if instantaneously killed, will immediately sink



to the bottom, and is lost to the hunter ; he must, therefore, be very quick in picking it up.

On small lakes, where beavers are very plentiful, they are caught in the following method : Circular holes of 3 or 4 feet diameter are made in the ice and at a convenient distance from the beaver houses ; around the edge of those holes, to the bottom of the water, long stakes of wood are stuck, so as to form a small circular enclosure, reserving only a small opening sufficient to admit the animal. The top of this hole is provided with a board so arranged as to fall when the beaver gets in and to completely shut up the hole, the hunter has then no further trouble than to fish it out with the point of his spear. To allure it into the enclosure, they generally place some green branches of the poplar or willow right in the center of it ; but this manner of taking them is practicable only in the months of February and March, when the mild weather entices the beavers out of their winter quarters for fresh food, their winter supply having become rather stale by this time.

Bear  
hunting.

The hunting of the bear is also an object of consequence with the Natives ; its skin, besides being a valuable article in trade, serves them in lieu of bed, the meat is excellent and the oil (of which it yields several gallons) is useful to anoint their hair and to rub their bodies, in order to defend them from musketoes. It is likewise used to season their dry and pounded meat or fish ; it is an excellent substitute for butter and makes even the poorest meat palatable.

Their general method of hunting the bear is with dogs, which are directed on the scent when a fresh track is discovered, and the hunter has then nothing to do but to follow. As this animal seldom outruns the dogs, when spent with fatigue and nearly overtaken, he generally climbs up the top of the tallest tree he

can find and, of course, falls an easy prey to the hunter, who is warned by the barking of the dogs.

In the spring, the bears frequent certain places where fish abound; here the hunters have only to ambush themselves morning and evening, and wait the instant to shoot the criminal, when he approaches the water side, in search of fish. They are likewise taken in traps at certain places where they resort in great numbers.

When the cold weather sets in, about the middle of November, they enter their winter habitations, from which they never stir before the month of April, unless the winter is uncommonly mild. The Indians assert, as an undoubted fact, that during these long months, these animals take no nourishment of any sort but what they derive from licking their paws, and yet, turn out in spring just as fat as they were when they entered their winter quarters.

The other animals which are hunted on account of their skins are : otters, cats, fishers, martens, minks, foxes, wolverines and muskrats. Otters are generally shot with the gun, but the others are taken in traps, and often abandoned to the care of the women and children.

They fish with nets, hooks, lines and spears, but they have a method of taking sturgeon with a kind of drag-net or *seine*, which, I believe, is peculiar to themselves. The net use for this purpose is about 20 feet long by 6 feet deep, when shut double. It is dragged between two small canoes, having two men in each; while the bowmen paddle gently down the stream, the men in the sterns hold the *seines* by means of long cords, fixed to each end and which can be shortened or lengthened according to the depth of the water and the wish of the *seineurs*. Two stones are suspended from the lower ends of the *seines*, by which the nature

Sturgeon  
fishing.

of the bottom and the soundings are ascertained, a very necessary precaution to keep the whole clear of foul bottom. The course of the canoes must form an obtuse angle with the middle of the *seine*.

Those nets are mounted like the English drag nets, with small knobs of cedar fixed to the upper border instead of cork. When, by the vibrations of the cords, they perceive that fish is taken, they instantly haul up and paddle with all their might to bring the canoes together and, thereby, shut up the fish in the *seine*. This method of fishing is, of course, practicable only in rivers, narrow channels and small bays, where the bottom is clear.

War.

The *Sauteux* have been from time immemorial at war with the *Scioux*, a populous nation inhabiting the country about the head of the Mississippi. It would probably be needless to enquire about the origin of their wars, as they have not the least tradition respecting the first causes of their ruptures. We may, however, suppose that they first quarrelled about their boundaries and renewed encroachments upon their respective hunting grounds.

Migration  
of the  
*Sioux*.

They assert as an undoubted fact that, formerly, the *Scioux* possessed the greatest part of the country, but, in course of time, as population increased, they emigrated to the westward in search of subsistence, where finding a vast uninhabited country, a milder climate and abundance of game, they remained and took possession of it, leaving behind only a few tribes, more attached to their native land. In this state, they say, their ancestors found the country when, for similar reasons, they emigrated from their ancient possessions to the eastward.

It would, therefore, appear quite probable that they may have quarrelled about their lands with the few *Scioux* tribes whom they found on their arrival, battles probably ensued, and the

Sciews, overpowered, were thrown back on the bulk of their nation at the head of the Mississippi. Be it as it may, it is, nevertheless, certain that an inveterate hatred has existed between the two nations, which will, probably, never terminate while both nations exist.

Some efforts have been made to mediate a peace between them, both by the Government and the Canadian traders. The leading chiefs of both nations were invited at Michilimakinac for that purpose, but neither arguments nor presents produced any other results than a partial cessation of hostilities for a few months.

The most trifling dispute between two individuals was always a subject of sufficient importance to renew the war, and, as they think it an indispensable duty to revenge on their enemies the death of their relations or friends who fell in battle, there is little hopes of seeing an end to this state of things. Their prejudices and superstition almost make it a duty to continue the bloody contest, as they imagine that an enemy killed by the father must necessarily be a slave to the son in the next world, and that a murderer is sure to make his peace with the offended party by presenting them with a scalp from the enemy.

While influenced by such powerful prejudices, we may naturally infer that no foreign agency will be of any avail to eradicate the inveterate and deep rooted hatred which has so long subsisted between the two nations.

When a war party is proposed, the chief despatches one of his young men with tobacco and the war pipe stem to such of the different tribes as are willing to revenge the death of their ancestors or relations who fell in battle; such as accept of the tobacco and smoke out of the pipe, are considered as soldiers. <sup>Modes of warfare</sup>

and must, in honour, assemble at some convenient place to celebrate the various ceremonies which are thought essential to the success of the expedition.

They consider the summer season, or the fall of the leaves, as the most favorable season for attacking the enemy, observing very sagaciously that, in case of defeat, in a winter season, the Sciews might easily surprise them by following their tracks in the snow, and as their enemies are more numerous, they would consequently be an over match for them in a regular or general battle.

In their marches, they observe the most exact discipline and the greatest precautions; no fires are kindled, no guns fired, when supposed within two days march of the enemy, for fear that the smoke or report would apprise the Sciews of their danger. If any vestige of a Sciew camp or village is discovered, the whole army immediately halt at a convenient place, and a scouting party is sent to ascertain their situation and strength. Should the report be favorable, the enemy is attacked a little before day light, while supposed asleep. Surprised in this manner, the most dreadful carnage ensues, without the least regard to sex, age or condition; the scalps of the slain are taken in a moment as trophies of the victory; and before the enemy can recover from their consternation, every one makes the best way back to his own country, where their exploits are celebrated by dancing, feasting and songs composed for the occasion.

If they suppose the enemy too strong, they think nothing of prudently retiring, quite satisfied if they have the chance of falling on a poor straggler, whether man, woman, or child, and procure a scalp, without loss to themselves. Their ideal of a good warrior is to know how to attack an enemy unawares and, in a retreat, to know how to baffle his pursuers by his superior cunning. Should they, however, be discovered and

obliged to fight a regular battle, they generally behave with great bravery, seldom asking or giving quarter.

A warrior who kills his antagonist and takes his scalp is considered a very brave man, but the war chief alone has the merit of the success of the enterprise, as well as the responsibility in case of any disaster by which he might lose a number of his men. Although he neither receives corporal punishment, nor is subjected to any public enquiry on his conduct, yet, he entirely loses the confidence of the nation and, consequently, falls into disgrace, unless he immediately retrieves his reputation by some extraordinary act of bravery against the enemies of his country, opportunities of which are never wanting.

The southern tribes, who live near the Sciéws, are necessarily always under arms and continually skirmishing with the enemy, but the *Maskegons* and tribes farther to the north seldom go to war; their small and scattered population makes it often difficult for them to muster a respectable party. Their great distance from the seat of war obliges them to make such considerable provisions for their families during their absence, (which cannot last less than thirty to forty days,) that their war parties are never formidable, generally from ten to one hundred strong. Sensible of their inferiority, they league themselves with their southern friends, or with the Assiniboines and Crees, two nations who have likewise waged eternal war with the Sciéws.

The *Sauteux* have, properly speaking, no regular system of government, and but a very imperfect idea of the different ranks of society, so absolutely necessary in all civilized countries. Their leading men or chief magistrates are petty chiefs, whose dignity is hereditary, but whose authority is confined within the narrow circle of their own particular tribe or relations.

There are no established laws to enforce obedience; all is voluntary, and yet, such is their confidence and respect for their chiefs, that instances of mutiny or disobedience to orders are very rare among them. Those "great men" being considered as "Fathers" to their respective tribes, claim, as the Patriarchs of old, the same authority over their followers as fathers naturally have over their children.

The next in rank are the *Michinawois*, who act as secretaries or ambassadors on great public occasions. The chiefs never act as judges or legislators without the general consent of their young men or vassals, and are, therefore, not responsible for any public misfortune which might happen through mismanagement in national affairs. Their province is to preside at their public assemblies, to advise the young men and regulate matters respecting the war; such are the narrow limits of their prerogatives, and yet they have as elevated ideas of their own importance as the most absolute monarch who ever wielded a sceptre.

They have nothing particular in their dress to distinguish them from the vulgar, except a wampum belt, worn only on great occasions, and a silver medal with Our Sovereign's head in relief on one side and the arms of Great Britain on the other. This sacred pledge of distinction is always worn about the neck, and carefully transmitted from father to son.

In the administration of justice they are very remiss, the judgment is often left to the option of the offended party. Murder is about the only crime in which the public take any concern, and even in this case, the chiefs or leading men seldom interfere, but leave the matter to the decision of the nearest relations of the deceased, who seldom fail to revenge the crime. If the murderer escapes, which is sometimes the case, they do not scruple to retaliate on some of his relations, and pretend

themselves perfectly satisfied and admit the murder justly avenged.

Though their language is not very copious, it is smooth and expressive, with a serious cast, like the genius of the people who speak it. It abounds with vowels; they cannot pronounce the consonants L, F and R; the letters K, Q, W and the broad A of the French frequently occur. They have no articles prefixed to their nouns, like our more cultivated European languages, nor do they distinguish them by particular termination, like the Latins; their interjections are numerous, and repeated on every trivial occasion.

When very angry or engaged in a dangerous enterprise, they have a certain manner of expressing themselves which proves the uncommon strength and energy of their language; for instance, they say "*Nicoibinnan-ni-ou*," which literally means, "I throw away my body" or "I throw myself away."

They generally express themselves, after the manner of the Orientals, by strong and lively metaphors, which never fail to command the attention of the audience, the greatest silence and decency is, therefore, observed in their councils or general assemblies.

They count as far as one thousand, but seem to have no further idea of numbers, they certainly have no more words to express them. In computing time, they reckon by winters and divide the year in four seasons viz: summer, autumn or the fall of the leaves; spring, or melting of the snow and winter. These are again subdivided into moons or months, which have in their language very significant names: *Abita pipone kigis*, or January, means "the half of winter moon." *Mikisi kijis*, or February, the "eagle moon", because about that time the eagles make their first appearance among them. *Nihak kijis*, or March,

Division of  
time and  
seasons.



the "*Outarde moon*", because in the course of this month those fowls arrive on their lakes and rivers, and remain sometime before they take their flight to the northern regions.

The next division of their time are days and nights, which they divide again, instead of hours, into break of day, sunrise, morning, mid-day, evening, sunset, night and midnight.

It is here worthy of remark that, as they compute their years by winters, so they compute distances by the number of nights which the traveller has to sleep out in making a journey. They say, likewise, in speaking of an appointment of time, "you may expect me back in five nights," but never reckon by the number of days.

They likewise divide their months according to the different phases of the moon, which they say is dead when eclipsed, and, therefore, think it an act of piety, to sing and beat the drum during the obscurity, by which they imagine that they bring it to life again.

Religion : *Kijai Manitou*, the "Master of Life," *Wiskendjac* and *Matshi Manitou*.—Immortality of the soul.—Inferior gods and Mediators. — Absolute faith in dreams. — The "grand religious festival" at *Lac la Pluie*.—The *Mitewic* ceremony, Indian Free Masonry.—The *Wabanoc*.—Care of the sick ; medicines.—Funeral ceremonies.—Respect and remembrance of the dead.

No people are more tenacious in their religious opinions, and less communicative on religious subjects than the *Sauteux*. To question them on such a subject is not only frivolous, in their opinion, but impertinent ; some will laugh and pretend ignorance on the subject, others will relate, with a most serious air, a long story of absurdities which they had by tradition from their ancestors.

Having no public priests nor any particular form of worship, many, as a consequence, deviate from the general opinion and either form new objects of worship of their own fancy, or remain satisfied with the acknowledgement of total ignorance of the mysteries of Divinity. Such dissenters, however, never doubt the propriety of the faith of their ancestors, imagining all religions good. But the following particulars seem to be universally believed by the generality of their tribes, and, therefore, may be regarded as "the national religion."

*Kijai Manitou*, or the "Master of Life", claims the first rank in their devotion : to him they attribute the creation of the heavens, *Kijai Manitou*.

of the waters and of that portion of the earth beyond the sea from which white people came, having by his will and pleasure created men, beasts and every thing belonging to his own particular district; he is also the author of life and death, taking pleasure in promoting the happiness of the virtuous, and having, likewise, the power of punishing the wicked.

*Wiskend-  
jac.*

*Wiskendjac* is next in power: he is said to be the Creator of all the Indian tribes, the country they inhabit and all it contains, but I never heard that this august personage enjoyed any other prerogative, nor claimed any of their worship, beyond a certain veneration or gratitude for the signal services he had done for them.

*Matchi  
Manitou.*

The last of their deities is called *Matchi Manitou*, or the "Bad Spirit." He is the author of all evil, but subject to the control of *Kjai Manitou*. Though he is justly held in great detestation, it is thought good policy to smooth his anger by singing and beating the drum, which *complaisance* effectually charms him and diverts his malice to some other object. The Master of Life being naturally good and worthy of all their devotions, is supposed to wink at such liberties, if not repeated too often.

These Deities had no beginning; the two first are represented as young men, and will continue so to the end of time; as to *Matchi Manitou*, he is as terrible and disgusting in his person as he is wicked in his dispositions, and will remain so to the end of time.

*Future  
Life.*

They believe in a future state and the immortality of the soul, and say that death is no evil, but a certain state that ensures a passage from this world to a better one, where good Indians will enjoy superior happiness. When life leaves the body, the soul immediately goes to the southward, to a delightful country

stocked with the choicest game and all things necessary for the happiness of man, and where *Kijai Manitou* receives them on the banks of a beautiful river. Here he keeps his court and judges mankind according to its deserts; the wicked Indians he delivers over to *Machi Manitou*, who receives them under the earth in a wretched dungeon swarming with serpents, and where the poor souls endure every degree of misery, while the good are immediately released from any future dread of pain, and enjoy every pleasure which the heart of man can desire.

Before they arrive at this desired Paradise, many precautions must be observed. They must cross the river on a single pole, laid across as a bridge, and carry all their wicked deed in a bundle on their back; if the bundle is too heavy, the unfortunate bearer is apt to stumble and fall in the river, whose rapid stream sweeps him along into the dreary regions, where he must for ever remain under the dominion of the "Bad Spirit." Infants or persons very old and infirm are naturally supposed unable to pass the bridge, but if they were persons of good behaviour before their death, the Master of Life takes pity on them and kindly helps them over.

The souls must have provisions and other necessaries for their journey to Paradise, as they are supposed to travel several days before they arrive at the river. On their arrival at the bridge, they are presented with some choice provisions, which they must refuse, whatever may be their hunger, under pain of being delivered to the Bad Spirit. All the Sciews they killed in war are supposed to attend them as slaves to the other world, where husbands live with their wives and children, where society exists as it did before death, having only passed from a mortal, precarious state into an everlasting life where there will never be a change.

*Kijai Manitou*, or The Master of Life, rules the universe by The Sun  
and the  
Moon.  
*Michinawois* or agents; two of the most considerable carry the

sun and the moon around the earth; they suppose the two former consist of metal and were made by the Master of Life for our convenience. I once observed to them that, as metal is naturally deficient of the properties of heat, it could not emit the least degree of warmth and, much less, the powerful heat of the sun, that it was, therefore, more rational to believe with the white men that the sun is a large globe of fire. They insisted, however, that it was brass, and that *Kijai Manitou*, by his almighty power, infused into it the properties of heat.

The superior education of the civilized man must give him better ideas of nature than ever the poor simple savage can acquire, hence the astonishment and superstitious veneration of the latter for the terrible and the sublime, whether the production of nature or of art. They regard thunder as an inferior divinity, which they represent under the figure of a bird, very powerful and dangerous, but which, they say, can be frightened away by the virtue of certain charms.

Inferior  
gods;  
mediators.

They have several other demi gods or patrons, whose agency is solely confined to certain actions of their lives, and are adopted or neglected occasionally, according to the confidence or caprice of each individual. They are supposed to be powerful protectors against many of the miseries and adversities of life and, likewise, mediators between them and the Master of Life. Those Penates, (for I consider them as such,) are selected from among beasts, birds or even inanimate objects, such as remarkable stones or trees; &c.; the generality prefer small wooden human figures, painted with vermilion, which they carefully keep in a wooden box, wrapped up in swansdown and kept in their medicine bag. This precious bag is particularly consecrated to the *Manitou*, and is supposed, likewise, to contain no small portion of the spirit of the Divinity.

Among animals, the bear and serpent are often distinguished with this extraordinary honor. I knew an Indian who never would kill a bear because he had adopted one of those animals as his patron, but, should he find any in his hunting excursions, he would make no difficulty to direct any other person to pursue and kill it. Numbers of them adopt the crow, and wear the skin of it, as a charm, about their heads.

All persons of note have their medicine bags and patrons, which they think highly necessary for the protection of their families. They are, indeed, seldom worshipped, but no one must speak of them with disrespect, as they would probably be punished by *Kijai Manitou* for their presumption.

They have the greatest faith in dreams, by which they imagine that the Deity informs them of future events, enjoins them certain penances and even inspires or encourages them in their most difficult and hazardous enterprizes. They pretend that our method of conveying our sentiments by reading and writing has originally been acquired in a dream. I have known several instances of some of their men who, by virtue of some extraordinary dream, had been affected to such a degree as to abandon every custom characteristic of their sex and adopt the dress and manners of the women. They are never ridiculed or despised by the men on account of their new costumes, but are, on the contrary, respected as saints, or beings in some degree inspired by the *Manitou*, yet, in other respects, they are merely considered as women and are never allowed the privileges refused the latter. It is really amusing to see stout strapping fellows of this order, nursing children, garnishing and making shoes, imitating the women in all their employments, even assuming the shrill tone of their voice, and walking with their toes inclined inwards.

Absolute  
faith in  
dreams

Religious  
ceremonies

At their public assemblies, their chiefs or old men officiate as priests; they address the "Master of life" in long and eloquent speeches, thank him for the blessings they enjoy, and implore his protection against the malice of their enemies. Songs and hymns, composed upon sacred subjects, are then sung, accompanied with the drum and rattle, and the service generally concludes with the distribution of a feast and several rounds of smoking. When performing this last part of the ceremony, it is necessary, before smoking, to incline the stem of the pipe towards the south, no doubt as an offering to *Kijai Manitou*, who is supposed to reside in that part of the Heavens, then towards the earth, the rising and setting of the sun, after which the performer smokes a few whiffs and gives the stem to the next person.

Grand Es-  
tival at Lac  
la Pluie

I was once present during the celebration of a grand religious ceremony by the late chief of *La Pluie*, previous to his going to war, at the head of a large party. For this purpose, a large lodge was erected at a small distance from the camp, from which the women and children were necessarily excluded. In the middle of the lodge was an oval frame made of twisted hay and clay, surrounding a neat hearth of very fine sand, on which a fire was made. A narrow space, about two feet broad, was reserved around the hearth and swept very clean, the remainder of the lodge was carefully covered with the tender branches of the pine tree, over which bear skins, blankets &c. were spread, as seats.

A small place, at the extremity of the lodge and right opposite the door, was reserved as a repository for their medicine bags and idols. Those sacred bags consisted of bear, beaver, otter, fisher and marten skins stuffed up so as to give them life appearance and ornamented with feathers, porcupine quills, &c. A kind of semi circular chapel consisting of small polished sticks, curiously ornamented and fixed perpendicular in the ground,

surrounded the whole. The medicine bags were all in a row, in front of which was placed a large stone daubed with vermilion and surrounded with small wooden images of men, serpents and birds. I thought the whole of a pleasing and solemn appearance.

Things being thus prepared, a day was appointed for the ceremony and we were all invited to attend, by means of a painted quill presented to each of us by the *Michinawois*, who told us at the same time to bring our smoking pipes. On entering we took our seats indiscriminately around the hearth; the chief *Michinawois* and a few old men sat next to the sacred medicine bags, and collected all our pipes as we entered the lodge. All were, on this occasion, painted and dressed in their very best; the principal men were distinguished by a bunch of swansdown powdered with vermilion, and fixed directly on the forehead.

Though I was admitted as a mere spectator, they gave me to understand that they expected my attendance till day light, and that I should assist them in the ceremonies necessary on the occasion. As I had no inclination to disoblige, and being besides sensible to the honor they had done me, I cheerfully acquiesced, which seemed to please them very much.

All being assembled, the ceremony began at dusk in the following manner. The *Michinawois* having prepared a quantity of tobacco, ready mixed, filled a pipe and lighted it carefully with a splinter of cedar wood. After making the necessary ceremonies with the stem, he smoked a few whiffs and presented it to next person on his left, who, after repeating the same ceremonies, gave it to the next, and in this manner it soon went around the whole circle, the *Michinawois* having passed all the pipes in his custody before the first pipe come back to him. The same ceremonies continued until all were empty, after which they were carefully cleaned and laid by for further use. I observed



that a very particular regard and veneration was shown to the painted stone already mentioned, during the whole smoking match.

We were next entertained with songs accompanied with drums and rattles. The performers on these sacred instruments were the most considerable men among them : the women and children, who had previously surrounded the lodge, joined chorus at certain intervals, which had a very pleasing effect. Smoking and singing were alternately repeated in this manner for the first part of the night ; we were then entertained with a feast consisting of wild rice, pounded meat, bear's fat and sugar, all mixed in a large kettle, which the *Michinawois* himself distributed to the company, not, indeed, by their ordinary custom of giving each individual his share on a separate dish, but in this particular occasion, the feast was too sacred to be polluted with either dishes, spoons or even the fingers of the profane, the *Michinawois* alone, as the immediate minister of the ceremony, could presume to handle it. He, therefore, cautiously took the kettle in one hand, while, with great solemnity, he crammed the other in the kettle, taking a small portion of the victuals between his fingers and forcing it in the mouths of the company as he went around the circle. I would have heartily wished to be excused from this part of the ceremony, but, well knowing the necessity of a cheerful compliance, I made a virtue of necessity and acquitted myself to their satisfaction, though I felt very near throwing up, as the victuals would, by themselves, have been exceedingly nauseous, even if served in a more decent manner.

These ceremonies were continued without intermission till near daylight, when a young man, who had killed his brother a few days before in a drunken frolick, abruptly entered the lodge. In his right hand he carried a branch of birch, very curiously

ornamented with feathers, ribands &c. His aspect was uncommonly melancholy; he advanced, dancing and capering around the hearth, roaring and lamenting like a Bedlamite. After allowing him to indulge in this manner for some time, the chief got up and, after making a short speech, joined the stranger in his caperings; he cried and sobbed in the most pitiful manner, tears could easily be seen running down his cheeks.

After acting this farce for a considerable time, both seemed heartily tired; the chief sat down in his place, and the young man retired from the lodge.

Another smoking match and songs succeeded, and also another feast, to which, this time, all were permitted to partake in his own manner, concluded the ceremony. The chief having addressed a long speech to the Master of Life, the company dispersed each retiring in the order they came in, and making a small salutation with the right hand to the repository of the sacred idols, thanking them in an audible voice which was echoed by those still present.

The *Mitewie* is a mysterious ceremony, rather of the nature of our Free Masonry, but with this remarkable difference that both sexes are equally admitted as members. Those who put up for candidates must be of a respectable footing in society, and make presents to satisfy the number of members requisite to constitute the meeting of the Order. They seldom or never meet to celebrate this ceremony except when a candidate is to be initiated.

On this occasion a spacious lodge is prepared in which several long poles are suspended in the manner of a scaffold, on which the different presents are exposed to view. All the members, dressed and painted as on all great occasions, go to this lodge in procession and preceded by drums, and, rattles. They take their seats indiscriminately on each side of the lodge, the men

on one side, and the women on the other. The oldest and most considerable men generally begin the ceremony by singing and beating the drum. After beating the drum for a considerable time, one of the fraternity gets up and gently dances right opposite the music, and, by degrees, a whole group of dancers join, keeping exact time with the drum and, when heartily tired, quietly sit down in their places and smoke their pipes, without observing any particular ceremony. After breathing a little, the drummers summon up the dancers again, and the new members are allowed to join the dance.

The same ceremony continues with very little variations the greater part of the day; but when it is thought necessary to bring matters to a conclusion, the drums are laid aside for a moment, a smoking match takes place and a general silence prevails in the lodge, which is interrupted by one of the members getting up, holding his medicine-bag in a horizontal position before him and at the same time running with a short quick step round the lodge, articulating unintelligible sounds as he proceeds. After parading two or three times around in this manner, he shakes his bag with great dexterity, makes a push with it towards one of the members and immediately retires to his seat.

The person pointed at pretends to be affected in an extraordinary manner; he groans, inclines his head in a languishing manner on his breast, or falls prostrate on the earth; he sometimes, indeed, contents himself with a little jerk backwards of the head, but always muttering something to himself, expressing his gratitude to the person who gave him the pretended shock. The same cheat is carried on until every member present has acted his part, and the newly adopted member properly instructed in the mystery.

It is perhaps needless to remark that none but members ever presume to enter the lodge; the others are permitted to stand

at the door and look at the performers as long as they please. Such as are not in the secret never presume to doubt the miraculous virtue of their medicine bags, and great pains are taken by those honorable members to improve such opinion.

The *Wabanoë* is another order of impostors who pretend, by <sup>The</sup> virtue of their medicine bags, to baffle all the secret machinations <sup>Wabanoë.</sup> of their most inveterate enemies, and even to kill them at pleasure without being detected. They have a certain root with which they rub the hands, feet, mouth or any other part of the body, and which has the peculiar property of rendering such parts so insensible for a few minutes as even to bear the effect of fire without the least feeling or injury, to the astonishment of those who are not in the secret; they have also their particular songs on this occasion, accompanied with music and dancing.

See : D. Cameron. " The Nipigon Country "

Conjurors

Except consumption and the king's evil, with such complaints <sup>Their</sup> as naturally follow excessive fatigue and famine, they are perfect <sup>doctors and</sup> strangers to our long catalogue of diseases. On the least symptom of sickness they have immediate recourse to medicine. Their old men and women act, occasionally, both as surgeons and physicians, and are always well provided with proper roots and herbs, which they administer to their patients with success. Purges and vomits are prescribed almost in all cases, and when bleeding is thought necessary, they perform it very dexterously with a flint. For violent pains in the temples, they make incisions with a flint on the parts affected and suck the blood by means of a small tube of horn. I have often experienced the good effects of this method.

For curing green wounds and burns, they are equally happy, but in very desperate cases their medical acknowledge is defi-

cient, they have then recourse to superstitious charms, and imagine that songs or offerings to their particular patrons will effectually remove the malady. It is very singular that they seldom impute sickness to any natural cause, but, on the contrary, imagine that some person has bewitched them, or thrown bad medicines in their way.

When at the last extremity and death seems inevitable, the principal men assemble with their medicine bags, drums and rattles, which they accompany with the death song, to encourage the departing soul on his journey to the next world.

Funeral  
ceremonies

When life is gone, the body is addressed by some friend of the deceased in a long speech in which he begs of him to take courage and boldly pursue his journey to the great meadow, observing that all his departed friends and relations are anxiously waiting to receive him, and that his surviving friends will soon follow.

The body is then decently dressed and wrapped in a new blanket, with new shoes garnished, and painted with vermilion on the feet. It is kept for one night in the lodge, and is next day buried in the earth. The nearest relations bear it to the grave, in which it is wrapped up in birch bark instead of a coffin, carefully laying his medicine bag under the head. Some bury kettles, guns, axes and various other articles with the body, but this custom is not general. Before the grave is shut, the nearest relation takes a lock of the deceased's hair and carefully wraps it up in a piece of cloth or blanket; this they continually carry with them from place to place and keep many years as a remembrance. This pledge of their affection is particularly honored at their feasts and drinking matches by having the first offerings of their meat and drink.

They either raise a pile of wood over the grave, or inclose it with a fence; at the head of the grave a small post is erected

on which they carve the particular mark of the tribe to whom the deceased belonged. The bodies of some of their most celebrated chiefs are raised upon high scaffolds, with flags flying and the scalps of their enemies, with other trophies of their prowess, suspended from a high pole, but all those monuments are not intended so much to distinguish their great men from the vulgar as to ensure to their departed souls the same respectability in the next world which they enjoyed in this.

It is customary with their warriors at the funeral of their great men to strike the post and relate all their martial achievements as they do in the war dance, and their funeral ceremonies generally conclude by a feast around the grave.

Their affection towards their departed friends is seldom obliterated from their mind, and it is very common to see them resorting to the tombs of persons dead thirty or forty years before, and honoring their memory with a feast, or paying them a pious tribute of tears and lamentations. In their mourning, they paint their faces black; wear no ornaments and let the hair fall carelessly about the face. They, likewise, stab their thighs, legs, and arms in a cruel manner; the women, for the loss of a husband or a favorite child, will cut all their hair, and both sexes wear a black string around their wrists and ankles. All their effects, except those which are absolutely necessary, are voluntarily thrown away, and may be taken by whoever chooses; they even carry their sorrow so far as to neglect the necessary duties of the chase, by which they expose themselves to suffer the cruel cravings of hunger during a long winter, and will often run the risk of literally starving were not some charitable persons found to support them.

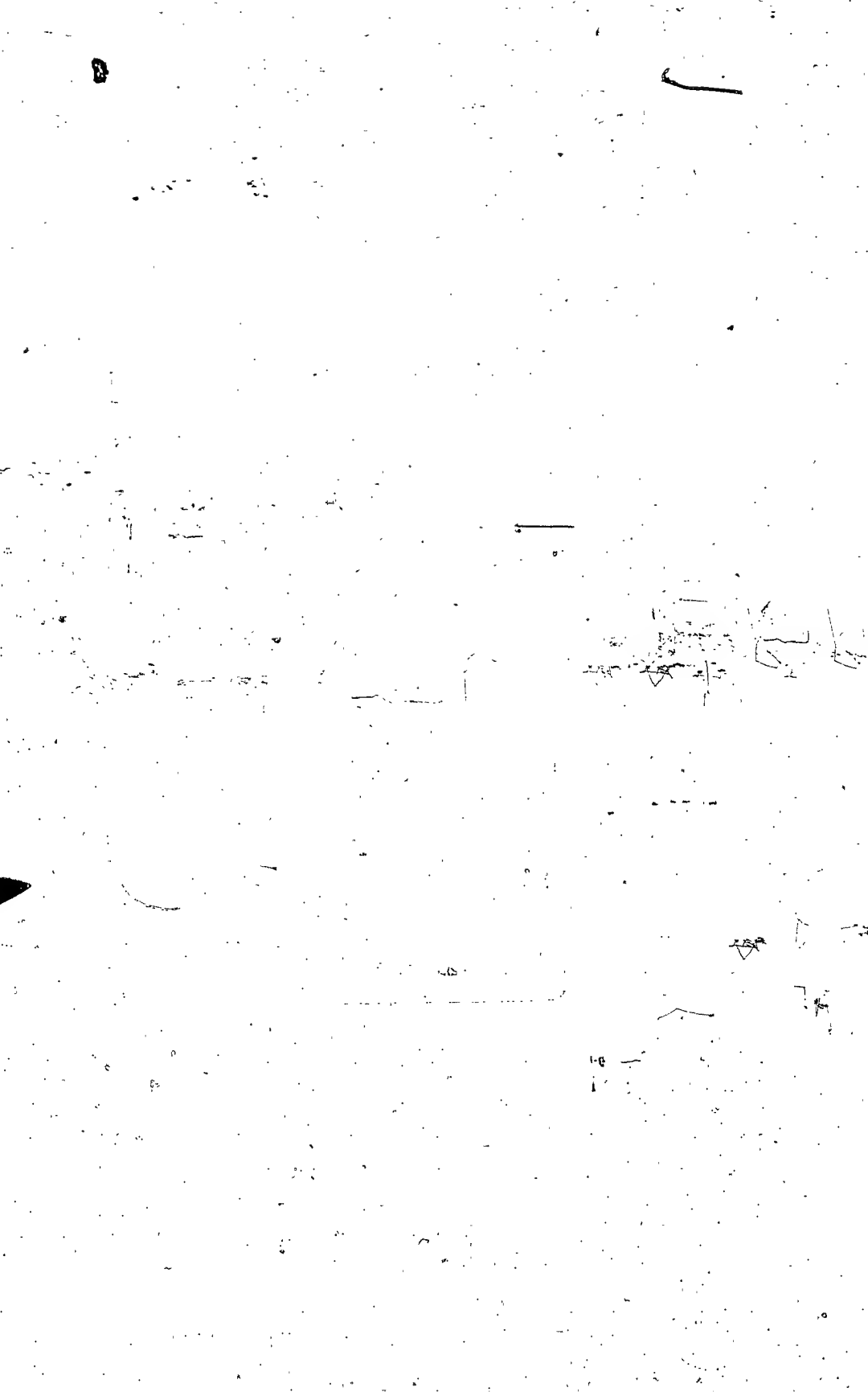
Respect for  
the dead.

If the mind dwells with pleasure on those proofs of sincere attachment to the memory of departed friends, it cannot but

deplore their cruel prejudices and inhuman conduct towards their aged and infirm. They, indeed, greatly respect their old men while they are of some use in society; but if, from extreme age or other infirmity, they become incapacitated to follow them in their encampments, they are then considered as dead to society, and their nearest relations think themselves no longer bound to maintain them; in this case a temporary shade is provided for them, with provisions and necessaries to prolong their miserable existence for a few days, and they are abandoned for ever. Any kindness or assistance to those poor wretched exiles would meet with the utmost ridicule from their relatives; they would think it a more meritorious action to knock them out of the world at once. Some indeed, with more humanity, prefer leaving their condemned relatives with the white people, but are quite indifferent about what becomes of them afterwards.





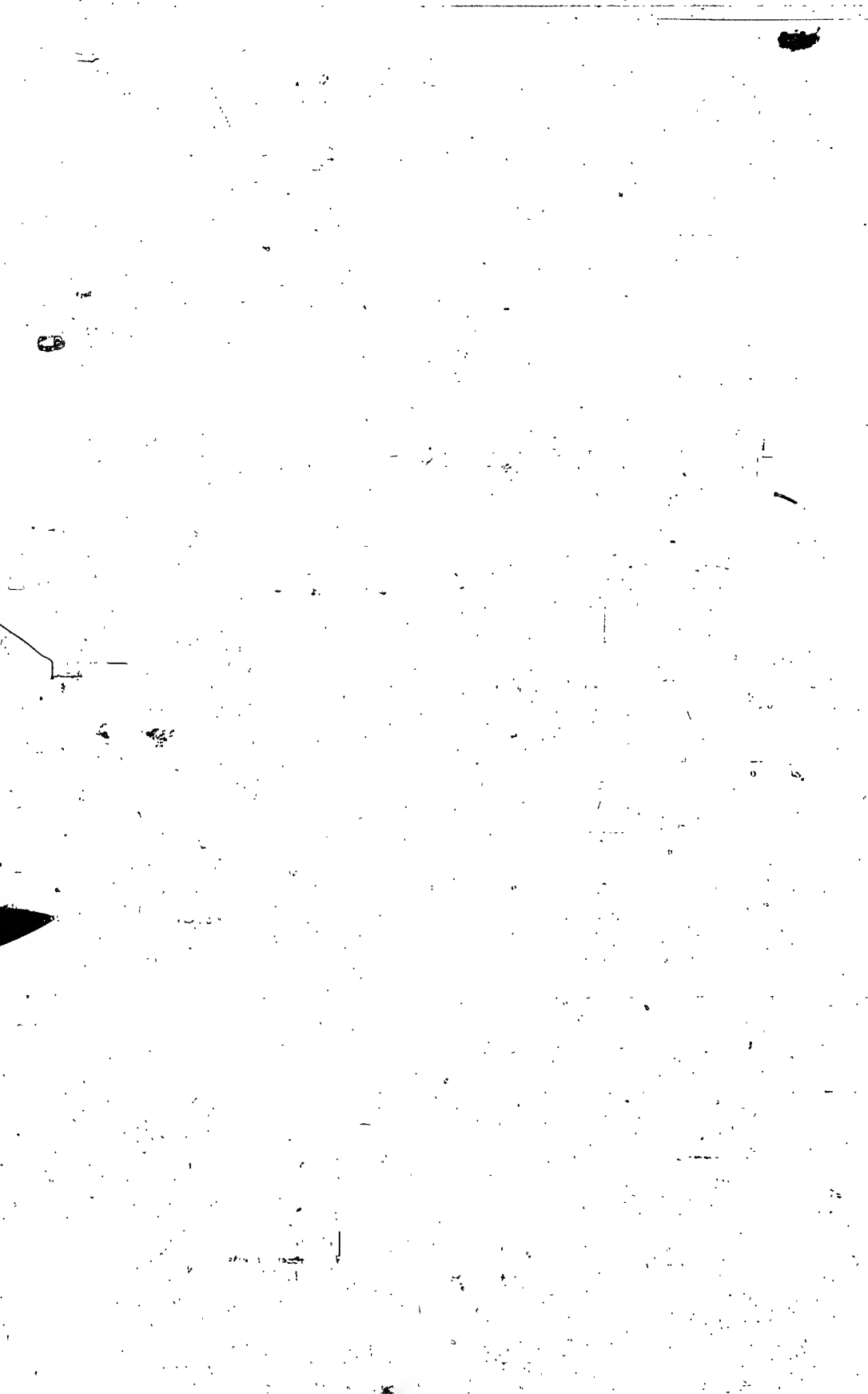


MR. JAMES M<sup>C</sup>KENZIE

EXTRACTS FROM HIS JOURNAL

1799-1800

ATHABASCA DISTRICT



MR. JAMES M<sup>C</sup>KENZIE'S (1)

JOURNAL

Fort Chippewean.

1799.

OCTOBER

8th

The climate

24th

The trade.

.....The ice began to drift down the river, for the first time this fall.

Took an inventory of all the goods remaining in the Indian shop, and afterwards suspended them in the garret à l'abri des souris. I took this inventory now in order to find out the expenses incurred this fall. When I began to give credits to the Indians, I had put aside a sort of small equipment to be given gratis, so as to save me the trouble of making an account current, but Cadien who assisted me was such a hurly-burly

(1) See: First series, "Reminiscences." page 56.

This journal has some interest as it gives a good idea of the North-West Company's mode of dealing with the Indians, and also, of the relations which, in some quarters, existed between the clerks and *engagés* of the Company and between the men themselves. It also shows the nature of the trade warfare which was carried on for several years between the two sections of the North-West Company and the means which men, otherwise honorable in life, were willing to have recourse to in order to defeat their opponents in trade.

After reading of the excesses which were committed in the North-West during those troubled times, and under a system of an unregulated competition which made the introduction of liquor an almost necessary condition of success, one may not be surprised at the rapid demoralization of the *coureurs des bois* and of the Indian tribes under the New Regime.

Officers and clerks of the Hudson Bay Company and of the two North-West Companies scrupled not, in the interest of their trade, to have recourse to means which

fellow that, while giving the credits, he would sometimes give things for nothing out of the equipment intended to be given on credit, and sometimes give on credit out of that which was intended to be given for nothing.

Got two cases of guns properly arranged, of which they had a great need being so rusty that the rust had already penetrated through the *fourreaux*, which could not be taken off except in pieces.....

NOVEMBER  
12th  
Treatment  
of the *voyageurs*

This morning we tried to set the nets under the ice, but could not, on account of the quantity of drift ice running underneath that already taken. While we were busy about the nets, Can-

common decency repudiates; is it then surprising if the men, whose education was, of necessity, inferior, should, in many instances, have lost that sense of moral rectitude which, under a better system, they might in some degree have preserved? As to the untutored Indian races, it would have been marvellous if they had resisted such demoralizing influences.

A young clerk stationed at Fort Alexandria, on the Assiniboine, in 1800; and who afterwards became a most influential member of the North-West Company, writes in his daily journal:

December. Sunday, 14th.—Still a finer day than yesterday; the sun really heated very much, and it even shined where the snow did not shine. Early in the morning, Desmarais' brother-in-law and *Crapaud* came to the fort with three young Stone Indians; they are come from the upper part of the lakes of the River *Qui appelle*; the three Stone Indians were sent by the old men of their camp to tell the Hudson's Bay people at the Elbow to go with goods, liquor, &c. to trade with them. They had a paper which Sutherland gave them last autumn, which I got from them to look at, and which I tore and threw into the fire, and I prevailed on them not to go to the Elbow.

It does not even seem to have struck him that there was something wrong in the proceeding. Good returns were expected from him as well as from the others, and good returns he must have; his promotion depended on his activity.

See: *Esquisse Historique*, pages 44-48.

Mr. James McKenzie appears to have entertained more than an ordinary share of prejudice against the "Canadian" *voyageurs* and *engagés* of the Company, but he generally expresses his ill feeling in a language so violent that it takes away from his utterances and appreciation much of their value. With all their faults and defects, the *voyageurs* had qualities highly appreciated by less prejudiced and no less well informed North-Westerners.

taras arrived from *Pointe de roche*; Mandeville, Labrie and Lattenville, from the Old Fort, and Cadien Blanc, from Bustard Island; At *Pointe de roche* they have lost three nets; at the Old Fort six, and are come for others. Those nets were lost in the ice. When they set them, they thought the ice was strong, but *par malheur*, it was not, and the first *coup de vent* carried all away. I thought it useless to quarrel them for their negligence, as it is as just that they should pay them as it is to make them pay an empty corn bag or a canoe awl which they lost between this and *Lac la Pluie*. I therefore gave them other nets as they cannot live without.

Cadien has killed only 10 white fish since his departure. His share of these has not fattened him, and a Canadian is seldom pleased *quand il n'engraisse pas*. Cantaras is like a skeleton, he lived all the fall upon berries. Labrie sent us 100 white fish.

Dusablon and Mandeville went off for the Old Fort; Lambert <sup>Voyageurs</sup> went with his *Bona Roba* to gather moss for their sons, the fruit <sup>women</sup> of their love, and darlings of their lives, observing very wisely that, as their stock of moss was almost finished, it is better to go now, while the weather is warm, than in the depth of winter, when it must be dug out of the snow with their hands (1). "*C'est mieux d'avoir plus que moins qu'il faut; ça servira toujours.*" Soon after he arrived with a huge load on his back, while *Madame* walked slowly behind, carrying nothing but her little snarling brat. *Masquasis*, seeing him arrive thus accoutred, observed that Lambert wanted nothing more to make him a woman than a cloak with a red lining over a black fringe.

There being nothing for me to do and nobody expected here, the 24th I went to the Old Fort; remained there all the day <sup>26th</sup> <sub>Consump- tion of fish.</sub>

(1) For the children's cradles. See: Peter Grant, "The Sauteux Indians."

yesterday, so as to see how they fished, and returned this day. F. Labrie has continually got 6 nets in the water, in which he generally catches 100 white fish, daily. *La Bécasse* has 3 nets in water and generally takes 60 pieces daily. *L'Espagnol* and Joseph Bouché have only 2 nets in which they catch about 40 pieces every day. Their nets are set behind the Little Island, which is before the fort. They went to visit them yesterday about an hour before day light and returned a little before sunrise, whereas they told us here more than once that they took the whole day to visit their nets. I went to see them while they were about it, the morning was very cold, which made them often rub their hands and put on very wry faces by way of remedy for the pain they felt.

In Labrie's house there are 5 men, a woman and three children in *La Bécasse's* house, there are 3 men and 3 women, and in *L'Espagnol's* there are 2 men and 2 women. In the first of these houses they eat about 35 white fish every day, in the second 20, and the last about 15. All these they devour in three meals, and sometimes in only one, but that is regulated by the surfeit they take at a time, which are not always equal.

The men do  
not agree.

They seem to owe a grudge to each other in the different houses; they never pay a visit to one another, and if their affairs oblige them sometimes to exchange a few words with one another, it must be without doors. Even the two brothers (the two Labries), have not spoken in amiable terms to one another since last fall. In short, they are as sulky as bears, but, to do them justice, they were not so to me; on the contrary, I was very politely treated by them. My description of them and of their actions may seem a bad return for their kindness; however, I have one thing in my favor, which is that all I have said to their prejudice is true, and the journal is intended to contain every

thing that is true about the Frenchmen.....

.....

Early this morning, *Trois Pouces'* young men went off. SOON DECEMBER. after *Biguillazé*, who had been sick here since about 10 6th. days ago, went away; at dark, Lambert, going to visit his traps, Cruelty and starvation. found Little Labrie at *la Pointe aux Chiens*, on a *trainé* and carried by this Indian, who found him at the entrance of *Rivière des Brochets*; almost frozen to death and being already unable to walk, through hunger and cold. He left the Beaver's lodge about 6 days ago, during which time he ate nothing and only made a fire for two nights; the rest of the time he slept without fire and without anything to cover himself but his usual dress; yet, he carefully carried on his back two new blankets, 1 pr leggings, one pair of shoes, but preferred freezing himself to death to making use of them.

He was carried into Cadien Leblanc's house and his feet, which he had been busy cutting with his axe when he was found, and which were as hard as stones, were put in cold water. When put into the water, he enquired whether his *petite hache* was safe, as he was more anxious about it than about his own body, which was far from being so. I must not omit telling here that the Beaver behaved to this poor fellow in a rascally manner. He first took his tobacco and ammunition from him and then told him to set off at once for the fort, which he accordingly did, but would never have arrived had he not been, by mere chance, discovered by the Indian who brought him here.

This morning early, Lambert set out for the Old Fort to inform the two Ladies of their brother's fate. Joseph Bouché arrived from the Old Fort, he has brought, at different times, upwards of 200 white fish for himself and Cadien LeBlanc. St André came from *Pointe de Roche*; bad fishery there.



Little Labrie's feet are still soaking in cold water but retain their hardness ; we watched him all last night ; he fainted often in the course of the night, but we always brought him to life again by the help of mulled wine. Once, in particular, when he found himself very weak and sick, and thought he was dying; he said : *Adieu ! je m'en va : tout mon bien à ceux qui ont soin de moi.*

.....

16th

About 12 o'clock, P. Labrie was freed from all his agonies in this world: Lambert set off to inform his brother of his exit. Dusablon made him a coffin ; this old fellow was asleep at the time he expired, a sure sign of the little attention he paid to his patient whom he undertook to cure. Lottinville arrived to cut his wood.

17th

Before day light this morning Felix Labrie, Parrentean, Mandeville and Lambert arrived ; about 12 o'clock Jos. Labrie arrived. Felix bawled and yelled at a hideous rate ; his eyes, which are naturally red and seem as if they were turned inside out, were much more so on this occasion through excess of rubbing, shed involuntary tears. *Pourtant*, said he to Lambert, *j'avais fait toutes sortes de duretés à mon pauvre défunt frère Pierrot, l'automne passé, pour tâcher de le faire rester avec moi.* Perhaps he had taken his *pauvre défunt frère Pierrot* for a dog, the more he is ill treated the more he attaches himself to the hand which ill treats him.

Joseph behaved with more decency than his brother, his sorrow seemed to flow more from his heart than from his mouth and eyes. As soon as the first effusions of feigned grief were over, they began to divide the deceased's money between themselves in the house where the corpse was. To tell the truth about them, they are at best but unfeeling, not to call them savage beings...

.....

Three men were this day employed, but to no purpose, to dig a grave among the rocks behind the Fort. I told them before they began that the prettiest as well as the easiest place to dig a grave would be on *Pointe au sable*, but, with that spirit of contradiction which is peculiar to all Frenchmen, they, every one of them, denied it, at the same time ridiculing me for proposing to inter *un Français*, who, by being so, is sacred, on a piece of land where the Indians always encamped, and might profane his tomb by scraping skins on it, &c., &c.

This morning, about 9 o'clock, P. Labrie was buried on the 18th. *Pointe au sable*. The poor man lived a miser, left 2800 *livres* and was interred with no greater expense than 1 phial rum, a coarse linen shirt and his length of Felix's old Ber (?) though I told them there was no scarcity of Russia sheeting in the shop. His body, which was swelled and full of blood, emitted an intolerable stench; yet, that old cannibal Dusablon, after wrapping it in its lining and putting it into the coffin, and without washing his hands, which were still covered with blood, cut fish into small pieces and put them in the kettle, of which they all partook and seemed to relish it with the avidity of Esquimaux.

..... 31st.

Great preparations going on here this night for to-morrow, which is New Year's Day. Dusablon, with hands which have not seen a drop of water since last New Year's Day, made a large kettle full of *boulettes* of fish, each as big and as ill-shaped as his own head. Lambert made fish cakes, *alias* "*pêtes*," boiled for an hour with dried meat. *Masquaro* made the fire, drew water and cleaned shoes, &c. Mr. Wentzel and I were continually running from the shop to the *hangard*, from the *hangard* to the garret, from thence to the kitchen; in short, every body in the house had a finger in the pie and were as busy all night as *une queue de veau*.

New  
Year's Day  
prepara-  
tions.

1800.

JANUARY  
1st, "New  
Year's  
Day."

This morning before day break, the men, according to custom, fired two broadsides in honor of the New Year, and then came in to be rewarded with rum, as usual. Some of them could hardly stand alone before they went away such was the effect of the juice of the grape on their brains. After dinner, at which every body helped themselves so plentifully that nothing remained to the dogs, they had a bowl of punch. The expenses of this day with fourteen men and women are : 6 $\frac{1}{2}$  fathoms spencer twist, 7 flagons rum, 1 ditto wine, 1 ham, a skin's worth of dried meat, about 40 white fish, flour, sugar, &c. Felix Labrie whose beard, from *chagrin* for his brother's death, is as long as my pen, was the first that began to drink and sing, and the last who gave up that farce. He is a gentleman who stands upon no ceremony ; he was not backwards in taking along with him to his own house the punch which remained in the bowl, and, there, drink it.

This morning, after drinking the first dram, this turbulent, ungrateful man began to spoil the pleasure of our entertainment by insulting and challenging to fight Lambert, the man to whom, of all present, he was most obliged to from the many services he rendered him on account of his deceased brother. The reason Labrie insulted Lambert was that the latter told him that he refused to help in plastering a house for P. Labrie, his brother, as he could have done it instead of playing cards at his feet.....

- 14th.

I thought it high time, since St Germain has taken another hunter, to send up Mr. Wentzel without waiting the different express arrivals. This morning I sent Lambert for Mandeville to the Little Island, to set off with him for the Forks after tomorrow, as this man offered himself the last time he was here. After dark, two young men arrived from the "Beaver" whom they left at Slave River ; the Beaver sent them to ask if Pierre

Labrie was arrived and to tell, if he was not, that he would be ashamed (1); a fine time, indeed, to enquire about him, a month after he had left them.—Reprimanded them for allowing him to come alone to the fort; they said it was that bad man the Beaver's fault, for they were like slaves to him and could do nothing without his consent. Gave them a piece of tobacco, &c.

The Beaver sent by these young men twenty two skins of his 15th. credits and also three skins worth fresh meat; gave them each <sup>Guilty</sup> a piece of tobacco, a flint &c, and sent the Beaver  $1\frac{1}{2}$  foot of <sup>Indians</sup> tobacco, with repeated assurance that, if he behaved well and <sup>left unpun-</sup> came to the fort the usual season, nothing would be done him <sup>ished.</sup> worse than paying whatever he brought besides his credits.

I know, if I don't clear myself by giving proper reasons for my thus countenancing the contribution to a man's death, that I will run the risk to be severely censured by divines and moralists of the age, as well as of the country in which I live. I must, therefore, tell these devout gentlemen in as few words as I can that, could I have considered myself as a private man, divested of any other employment or duty than that of an independent man, then I would not do what I have done, but, being a clerk in the North-West Company, bound to forward their interest in every respect to the utmost of my power, I could not, in consequence, think it consistent with my duty or their interest to make them lose a pack or two by ill treating these Indians for the sake of a man who never gained them one farthing in his life, and whom we could not revive.

.....  
 This morning, Charles Cadien's comrade arrived and paid 62 16th. skins peltries and 4 do Mt credits. He was so haughty on his arrival on account of his skins that he threw the tobacco I gave

(1) Sorry, disappointed.

him in my face, saying it was not good, and that I lied when I said there was none better in the fort. The men's advice, though not asked, was to pack the piece of tobacco into the Indian's nose, or give him a kicking for his bad breeding, which, they said, from *Monsieur MacClause* or *Monsieur MacKancie* would meet with this punishment. This rough usage I thought had encouragement for him to kill more beaver, and a very indifferent recompense for those he had already brought, which I think made ample amends for his insults. However, in case he might do the like again, perhaps when he had no such substantial atonement to offer, I told him to take care and not behave so impudently in future.

22nd.  
The enga-  
gée.

Vermette and Parrenteau arrived from Little Island; soon after arrived that man *sans souci* Beauchemin. The men at *Pointe de Roche* turned this *estatuë* off at the beginning of winter because he would do nothing but sleep and eat, and, *enfin*, Labrie who took him then *en pique*, sent him again about his business for the same reason. Having no other resources left for his maintenance he has come here to consult about the easiest and best method to be adopted under the circumstances. As he is a stout, lusty numskull, my *conseil* was to go to *Pointe de Roche* immediately, and if the men there refused to give him his share of the *agrès*, or feed him, that he might force them to do either by foul means; he promised compliance. He made several of the men at *Pointe de Roche* *serrer la gucue* already. Snowed all day.

31st

As we were going to bed, Laprise and a Beaver Indian arrived from the Slave Country gentlemen with letters: they left Slave Lake 13 days ago. Gave Laprise one foot of tobacco and a piece to the Indian, with a dram &c. &c. Laprise had about 6 pounds of pimecan remaining, which he delivered.

This is my 5th year in this country, and I have seen often enough men arriving from voyages, yet, this is the first of them I have seen deliver any remainder of provisions. When they leave a post, they take good care to be provided with more provisions than they can easily cram into themselves till they arrive at the next, but when they come to the next post, if they are asked, *avez vous manqué de vivres ou avez vous eu assez*, their answer is, *j'avons eu assez, mais j'avons mangé la dernière bouchée hier soir*, or, if they want to get something to eat immediately on arrival, there are generally two *soirées depuis qu'ils ont rien mis dans leur corps*.

Same weather as the two days past; snow melting fast on the houses. At night, two Montagners arrived from their lands; they have a small *traine* between them, which I suppose they lugged along in turns. They are shabby looking fellows. The first thing they told us was that all their relations were dead, which rids the world of a number of rascals. I questioned them all the *veillée* about those Montagners they left on their land; although they be all dead, yet I am in hopes they will all rise again from the dead to give accounts of their actions while in this world, but these stupid fellows who unworthily survived the fate of all the rest could give no satisfactory account. What they told one moment, they contradicted the next, so that I was not a bit wiser when I finished than when I commenced.

FEBRUARY

17th.  
The In-  
dians

It is unnecessary telling always in the journal that every Indian who arrives, whether good, bad, or indifferent, gets a bit of tobacco and a dram; it suffices to tell, once, that it is the custom of the place, and any one who reads of an Indian's arrival may suppose that this custom is followed, and, should he wish to know how many bits of tobacco and drams were expended, he can

count the Montagners on his fingers as he reads on ; the number of Montagners found will be the number of the bits of tobacco and drams required. If he wishes to know the real value given, I will tell him, the tobacco is always rotten and the rum mostly water.....

MARCH  
28th  
The Bourgeois and  
the clerk

Sent Marlin 15 measures mixed rum and 3 feet tobacco. Now, for you, Antithesis Philosophers, who are forever moved by the spirit of contradiction, and feel an itching to find fault where there is none, here is a fine occasion to show your wonderful parts and produce something worthy of your sect. Sending rum to the Indians, according to you, is an unpardonable error in a poor fellow's conduct ;— but may he beg leave, Gentlemen, to ask you a few plain questions by way of vindication of his supposed error ? Pray then ! will 19 packs of fine beaver have no weight in your debates ? if they will not, I am sure they will in the Gentlemen of the North-West Company's pockets, when reduced into hard cash.

What is the reason you fret so much about sending rum to the Indians more than other goods ? is it because 7 parts of the 8 of this rum are pure water, of course, less expensive to the Company and more pleasing to the Indians than other goods ? No, Gentlemen, I suppose you will say it is because it debauches the Indians and renders them troublesome. But can sending a small keg inland by a clerk debauch them more than giving them a large keg in the fall and spring by a *Bourgeois*, at the Fort, while the Clerk who succeeds him is limited to give him a smaller quantity in a kettle ?

If the Indians be spoiled, it is the *Bourgeois* and not the clerks that do it ; the former give the Indians every time they pass large presents, which the latter are either afraid or forbidden to give ; the one, in consequence, is regarded by the Indians as a Superior

Being, whom they must respect, the other is a mere tool to them, whom they despise and need not mind.

Notwithstanding all this, our employers expect the same returns from us as they could hope from one of themselves in our places, but they cannot conceive that in our little stations we must act on as high a scale in order to produce the same effect as they.

Here again, Gentlemen of the "Critic Class", you will reprimand my warmth, which, in your opinion, is impertinence, to presume to speak against my employers, but be pleased to recollect that, though I have spoken against some of their actions, yet, I have not against their interests.

Should you itch to show your zeal, good nature, &c. by making remarks, you may have an index made for that purpose at the end of this Journal, for I have taken care that you should not find an inch of clean paper, either at top, bottom or margin of it, (1) not from fear of your arguments, but from the fear that you will not leave me room enough to refute them, of which I by no means despair.

.....

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Gave credits to the "Whitefish's" son and *gendre*; they go <sup>31st</sup> to their lands, but promise to be back next winter. Gave the Whitefish's son, for nothing, 1 awl, 1 fire steel, 1 gun worm, 3 flints, 1 common belt, 2 horn combs, 1 hook, 1 needle and 34 fathoms of rotten tobacco.....

.....

This morning Marlin sent the "English Chiefs" for ammunition, tobacco, combs and vermilion. Sent him two measures ammunition,  $\frac{1}{2}$  fath. tobacco, 1 comb and a little vermilion mixed

APRIL  
2nd.  
The  
"clothing" of a  
chief.

(1) In fact, the journal is written on foolscap paper, and the sheets of paper, (then scarce in the North-West) are so crammed full that no place is left for a single remark.



with flour. They arrived soon after in great pomp, in all 20 men, the "Little Bird" and his fellows having joined them since the 27th ult. when their number was 14.

After they paid the most of their credits, amounting to 1101 skins, Martin was clothed. Gave him, the "Little Bird," the Little Bird's son, the "Old Whitefish," the English Chief brother, to drink and smoke with their dependants, 1 fath. tobacco and the rest of a keg of mixed rum, out of which all the expenses in this article were taken since last fall to this date. It wanted  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches of being full, and the Montagners believed it did not want  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch, and they seemed quite happy with their good luck. Had these presents been given to these "great men" separately, it would not have appeared half so much, nor have been enough to content them.

Several harangues suitable to the occasion were made on both sides, and the new chief, with his laced coat, with his large keg at his tail, stalked along to his lodge, just an hour after sunset. He made many ceremonies before he accepted of the laced coat; he wished to have a red greatcoat, short breeches and cotton stockings, like the English Chief some years ago at the Old Fort; he would not be a petty chief, he aspired to be raised from nothing to the highest pitch of Glory which a Montagner could possibly be raised to.

In short his head was already so intoxicated by his change of fortune, that he did not know which end of him stood uppermost, whether he stood or sat, walked or flew, was a man or a beast, or a mixture of both.

9th.  
Degraded  
condition  
of the wo-  
men.

*Saurarda* arrived and paid 72 skins, beaver credits, between himself and two sons. This Indian brought his daughter, who deserted in the course of the winter from Morin, at Slave Lake, in order to be returned to her husband (Morin). Mr. Porter

wrote me, by Morin's orders, to sell her to the highest bidder and debit Morin for the amount.

Two advantages may be reaped from this affair ; the first is that it will assist to discharge the debts of a man unable to do it by any other means, for he is neither good middleman, foreman, steersman, interpreter nor carpenter ; the second is that it may be the means of thickling some lecherous miser to part with some of his hoard. I therefore kept the woman to be disposed of in the season when the Peace River bucks look out for women, in the month of May.....

Joli, Lecompte, St André, Cantaras arrived from the Island, ~~10th~~  
" bag and baggage ".

I offered Morin's wife (to take care of her till the arrival of Mr. Finlay,) first to Etier, then to Dusablon and then to old Marcil, but she refused them all three *tour à tour*, and, to convince them how heartily she hated them all three, she set up her pipes at the bare mention of their names. As soon as they were gone, she said that, as it was her fate to be bound to a *Benchulaigh-Slini*, she should as soon have her former *Benchulaigh-Slini*, Morin, as any other. She has a young *Ojij* on board her frigate on its way to this world, but how far advanced in the voyage, I have not enquired.

This, according to the Frenchmen, is Easter Sunday ; my computation and theirs don't agree, for my Saturday is always their Sunday *fait à coup de pioches*.<sup>11th.</sup>

Cadien Leblanc's wife having fallen sick in land with the Indians, was brought here the 2nd instant on a *traine*, and, after suffering very much before and since her arrival here, she expired this evening. Dusablon, though the *plus bête*, was ordained priest ; by him the dying woman was baptized, and as he delivered the last word of this ceremony, she gave her last gasp.

12th. Cadien LeBlanc interred his wife on the *Pointe de Sable*, along side of Labrie. Before her death, she desired that nobody might wear her clothes, and, accordingly, Cadien burnt every thing belonging to her.

16th.  
The condi-  
tion of Fort  
Chippe-  
wean.

Blowing very hard all day, Cadien le Blanc had piled up two cords of wood behind Cadien-gros-nez's house, exactly at the corner of the *hangard* which contains the ammunitions, high-wines, &c.; on this pile of wood, *Picoté's* wife had spread some moss which, from sparks that flew from Cadien-gros-nez's chimney, took fire and served as spark to the wood. Had not *Quebec's* daughter informed us, the *hangard* would in a short time have been blown up, and, of course, we would have undergone the same fate.

It is to be regretted by every body who winters here, as well as by every one whose interest it is to guard the Company's property, that a powder house was never made at this place. It would be, however, a work of very little expense to the Company and of great use for the preservation of their property and of the lives of those who have it in charge. I cannot help thinking it ridiculous that the Forks, (Peace River,) where there are but a few kegs of powder and few goods, should be arranged in every thing, even to superfluity, while this place, where all the goods and ammunition are stored, is left destitute of a good *hangard*.

Fort  
McLeod.

At Mr. McLeod's fort, the men's houses are better arranged than the *Bourgeois's* houses here. The fort is built with five bastions; courtyards are made everywhere, a spacious garden is made around the fort, a well, a powder house and even a ..... house are made in this garden. Here, we have neither of these conveniences, nor we do ask for any of them, except the two

most necessary, viz: a powderhouse and *hangard*. We don't presume to find fault with the gentlemen who arranged Peace River Fort so well, but we do, for leaving this Post, of greater consequence, so ill arranged.

The gables of the *hangards* of this place are covered with bark, through which any thief, without hurting himself, may trust either his hands or his head, and take away what best suits his fancy of the goods which they contain. As for the lock of the big *hangard*, a child may open it with his fingers, yet it has been often changed this winter for other locks, which proved not better than the first.

We are every moment in imminent danger of being squeezed to death by the fort pickets, which seem to have long ago been at war with one another. Several "*pagées*" of them are at present flat on the ground, and several more are *in doubt* whether they should fall or not.

Fourmier and Ouellette arrived from Slave Lake with the 17th. express. (1). Good news from the Slave Country gentlemen. *Trois Pouces* and three or four more Montagners arrived from the Carribou Country, who informed us that Lafrance had been killed last summer by the rascals who deserted with Dusablon's wife. His name is, *l'homme qui regarde le tétou*. He has set off for *Fort des pierres*.....

The Montagners, being much afraid, came all into the house to enquire whether we intended to revenge Lafrance's death upon them, or not. In order to keep them hereabout all summer, I

18th.  
Arbitrary  
treatment  
of the In-  
dians.

(1) Two expresses were yearly sent through the continent with the correspondance reports &c. to and from the different posts throughout the North-West. This was the summer express, hurrying down to Grand Portage, with the result of the winter work.

The winter express left the northernmost stations of the north about the end of November, passed through the whole country on sledges and snowshoes, and reached Sault Ste Marie, in March.

thought it necessary to assure them that none of those who were here now should suffer the least injury on that account while they behave themselves as they ought, but that if any d—nd rascal of them deserted this summer with any of the Frenchmen's women, he and she would both lose their heads, were we to give 200 skins as a reward to such as would choose to search for them and cut off their head.

They protest against the sale of their women

They desired that we should trade no more women, on any account. I told them that we would do as we thought proper, for it was not their business to prescribe rules to us.....

20th. Summary dealings.

The men busy about the canoes.—I am always recommending to the men to avoid quarrelling with the Indians, yet, it is impossible to keep them from doing so.

The old "Whitefish," last fall, sold Galarneau 5 small canoes, which the latter left at the entrance of *Rivière des Rochers*, where *Trois Pouces* encamped, and, this day, I sent Lambert, Cantaras and St André to fetch them here. On their arrival there, the Montagners along with *Trois Pouces* seized upon the canoes and would not allow the Frenchmen to take one of them. The Cree's brother, in particular, threatened to go for his gun to kill the Frenchmen for daring to take away their own property, and they all said it would not be a difficult matter to cut off every one of us, as they are more numerous than we. The Frenchmen, however, took their canoes in spite of them, but not before they (the Frenchmen) had taken the *fourreaux* off their guns to fire, from which they were prevented by *Trois Pouces*, who interfered only to quiet them.

These cowardly villains impose too much upon our good nature. I was, therefore, determined, on receiving these news, to

let them see what they had to fear from our anger, when so often and so unjustly provoked by them.

Five of us armed ourselves to go to the entrance of the *Rivière des Rochers* to enquire into the truth of the Frenchmen's report, and, if true, it was our intention to challenge them to fight bravely, which no Montagner, I ever heard of, ever did.

As we were going out of the house, *Marlin*, who was encamped at the *Pointe de Sable*, having received information of our intention, arrived almost out of breath, and, after much praying, and many promises for his relations' future good conduct towards the Frenchmen, he made us consent to lay down our arms and avoid any hostile attack; for, he said, the Montagners were too great cowards to oppose the Frenchmen bravely, and he knew, if I went at the head of the Frenchmen, it was not *sans dessein*, for we could massacre them as they would do so many carriboux.

D'Oust, who had been sent to the Forks to make a canoe, arrived; he informed us that he left Perrone and Bellegarde in Bustard Island, with 3 loaded canoes, to oppose us at this place.

MAY.  
22nd.  
Opposition  
from the  
X. Y. Co.

In order to keep them from building a Fort on *Pointe de Sable*, the prettiest spot for that purpose on this side of the lake, Mr. Finlay marked it out for the North-West Company upon receipt of this unexpected piece of news.

This morning, about 11 o'clock, the Potties (1) arrived; they debarked and encamp on the Little Island, near the Fort. Perrone having boasted of having come here only by spite to this Company, and of having traded 40 skins in the Bustard Island previous to his arrival, Mr. Finlay wrote him a letter enquiring

23rd.  
Violence,  
intimidation.

(1) Name given in the Athabasca district to the people of the X. Y. Company,—the "Little Company",—by their opponents. It is perhaps a corruption of the word, "les petits", viz: the members of the "Petite Compagnie".

into the truth of this report; but he did not return an answer, pretending he did not understand the letter, because it was written in English.

Mr. Finlay then despatched *Frisé* down a second time, desiring Perrone to meet him about half way, so as to get an explanation of the letter, but he did not understand this neither: therefore, seeing it impossible to chaw Perrone out of his lurking hole, Mr. Finlay and I went down to have a look at this cowardly fellow.

Mr. Finlay, while he explained his letter and the motives of his interview, trembled with anger, but while Perrone denied every charge laid against him in the most abject manner, every limb of him trembled with fear. He had taken Mr. Finlay's letter, the meaning of which was couched in pretty severe terms, to be a challenge, and Mr. Finlay's appearance to mean death:..

.....

24th.

This morning, Mr. Finlay set out for *Lac Lapuaie* and Grand Portage. Last night, he gave a large keg to the Montaguers, at their chief's request, in order to incite them to behave well during the summer; but as soon as he was out of sight they went to the Potties to take credits. However, partly by persuasion and partly by giving them a few more credits, which I at first refused, I think I kept them from taking many credits. If I have not, I shall, at all events, try and perhaps prevent them paying their credits there. I need not here tell the reason of giving them more credits; it ought to be plain enough without an explanation.

25th.

About 12 o'clock last night, Mr. Stuart and Mr. Wentzel went off with three men and a few pieces for the Peace River. The former is to build a fort for the Beaver Indians between

*Grand Marais* and Lafleur's fort, and the latter is to work with Brousseau at *Grand Marais*.

Snowed in the evening..... June, 6th.

Blew a hurricane all this day and began to snow in the evening. This carried away the *bateaux* from *Pointe aux chiens*, although Lavolette and I secured them in the best manner possible, this morning. <sup>7th</sup> The climate.

This morning there is a foot of snow on the ground; more fell in the course of the day and, in the evening, it froze to such a degree that the *marais* about the fort were covered over with ice, half an inch thick. <sup>8th.</sup>

This morning, we missed Perrone and three of his men: he was, yesterday, shooting plovers. I suppose, as hunger make old women trot, so it does with old woman Perrone! Sent St Germain after him, but he returned in the night without having seen him, or any vestiges of him. As I was passing their house I found *Kewigwache's* canoe, which I would have taken for his credits, but it was not worth two skins. I spoke of taking it from them, which made old Parrin, Perrone's successor, speak to me very insolently; this provoked me and induced me to give him a few blows across the lips, which stopped his mouth, threw him on his back and made him bleed. <sup>10th.</sup> Violence.

About twelve o'clock *Kewigwache* arrived and informed us that Perrone debauched him to go as conductor to Cumberland House, for which he made him a chief, and that, going up at the *Trois Petits Portages*, he made several wise reflections on the consequences of this undertaking, returned all the trappings of a chief (which he knew did not belong to a man of his under- <sup>11th.</sup>



standing,) to the right owner, and bid his Worship adieu, in spite of all his entreaties to persuade him to perform his engagement:

Received *Kewigivache* according to his merits and heartily forgave him his former bad conduct on account of his last good conduct. We are now let unto Perrone's design, and our future care must be to frustrate it.....

12th.

*Kewigivache* went off in order to find the *Bras Cassé*, who is in the Athabasca River with 4 or 5 of his relations, as I am afraid Perrone may again leave unknown to us and debauch a more resolute guide among the Crees. I sent *Bras Cassé* a small keg of rum and  $\frac{1}{2}$  fathom of tobacco in order to induce him to go out of his way, to Lac Claire. I look upon it to be of the utmost consequence to keep him from getting a guide, and this can never be effected without incurring some expense to the Company.....

JULY  
8th.

About 10 o'clock this morning, Messrs Thomson and Wentzel set out in a light canoe for *Grand Marais*; Mr. Thomson goes to the Rocky Mountain, giving all the advice and assistance he can to the gentlemen acting for this company as he goes along. Mr. Wentzel will remain where he was before, and will have Mr. McLeod to help him and Brousseau. The men had for their voyage to Grand Marais  $1\frac{1}{2}$  *taureau*, and the gentlemen so much dried meat as they chose to take.

Laviolette found it blew too hard for setting off for *Jac Clair* at the head of his Montagners; desired him to inform St Germain of Perrone's-illiberal abuse of him. My reason for so doing is to make Perrone and Piché hate one another, as I am afraid the latter, being a little cracked brained and as variable as the wind, may, by dint of presents and frequent interviews, allow himself to be debauched by the former, if not to engage, at least

to allow him some advantages with regard to the trade, and perhaps instruct him in things he ought to be kept from knowing, I do not wish to prey into Perrone's schemes before they are put into execution, it will then be sufficient time to know and to disconcert his most complicated ones.

Laviolette went off for *Lac Claire*; St Germain arrived with <sup>9th.</sup> two Crees, who brought 16 skins worth fresh meat; gave them a measure rum each, gratis, and the usual ammunition, at departure. St Germain made Perrone *serrer la queue*.

St Germain told me that one of the Potties, called Lacroix, told him at *Mamaoui* that, had he been in old Parrin's place when I beat him, instead of my giving him a beating as I did to Parrin, he would have given me one. He also boasted that, last winter, he took a horse out of Mr Daniel McKenzie's yard, that no body dared say a word to him. This fellow told myself, sometime ago, that Mr. Campbell was the greatest *vieille* in the North. St Germain had a dispute with him on this account.

Perrone's men came from *Mamaoui*. I went to Lacroix and <sup>10th.</sup> challenged him to fight for backbiting myself and the two <sup>Provoca-</sup> gentlemen I mentioned yesterday. He refused to fight, and said that St. Germain was an old liar. Soon after St Germain arrived bag and baggage from *Mamaoui*, there being no use for his staying there as Perrone's men are all here. I informed him of Lacroix calling him a liar. He and I went immediately down to speak to Lacroix, but the fellow was not in the house. As we stood in the hall, Perrone walked out of his room, saluted me and made St. Germain the compliment of inviting him to walk out of his house, at the same time calling him un *vieux insolent*. St Germain immediately obeyed and challenged him to fight any way he chose, and, upon Perrone's refusal, he abused him to the last degree. I went

out soon after St Germain in order to go away, but Perrone recalled me, telling me that he did not desire me to go away, because, I suppose, he knew I was not to be trifled with like St Germain, for I had my *disk paré à mon côté*. I returned into the house a second time, as I was bent to pick a quarrel with him.

He complained of the hardship of being abused so much by St Germain; I answered that it was his own fault in calling that man *une grosse bête* and threatening to burn his eyes with powder, and that it was a shame for him to call all those who came from Scotland, *vachers*. He said he did not call all, but a few of them, *vachers*. I desired him to name one here in the North, and told him that the one who served him as a clerk had been a *vacher*, and had the heart of a *vacher*—since he remained with him.

Here as I began to talk rather loud, Perronne walked into his room abruptly and I came away to write the whole transaction as it happened, in the Journal.

.....  
*La graine* arrived with 9 skins of fresh meat; gave him a piece of tobacco; he asked for ammunition, but I reminded him of what he had when he came last.  
 .....

18th.

"A drinking match"

Last night, in the drinking match, the *Roche qui-reluit's* brother proved very troublesome, and we had some difficulty to appease him and some of the other Crees. He told me that as I was too fond of the rum, the young men would forsake me, and I would be ashamed; I answered that I would not be ashamed, for I was yet young, knew better countries than this, and would leave them. He then said he spoke to no purpose.

Laviolette and Piché watched turn about on the rock. They caught women carrying meat and green skins to *Vieux Parrin*.

which they afterwards traded here. The *Petit Mâle* traded a *brochette d'original* dried with *Vieux Parrin*, for rum; I saw him carrying the meat there: he offered it to me twice, but as we were in sight of their house I refused it and told him to trade it, which he accordingly did and found their rum worse than ours. This was occasioned by our stopping our drinking match for a quarter of an hour.

Drolet arrived from *Grand Marais*; he met Perronne going up 19th. the Peace River, but he was pitiful, for he had not the least morsel to eat. The Indians still drinking. The *Roche-qui-reuil's* brother asked permission to bring a green original skin to *Vieux Parrin* to get strong rum; he obtained permission, went and came back soon after with the skin, saying that when he asked strong rum of Perrin, the old toad shook his head, and he immediately came off with his skin to me, for I never shook my head. Gave him a little port wine mixed with rum and sugar, to which I added a p—

The Crees went and encamped before the Little Potties who 20th. borrowed fish this day of an old Montagner woman. Gave the *Roche-qui-reuil's* brother the value of 10 skins for nothing, in ammunition and tobacco, and gave each of the other Crees 2 measures am: a flint and a piece of tobacco. They went away exceedingly well pleased and promised not to come to the fort till they had made their meat credits. The *Roche-qui-reuil's* brother had 26 phials of rum at the commencement of and during the match, but the others had not a drop but a phial on arrival.

The "Red Knife" brought us 25 pieces of fish from Lavolette. 31st. Gave the prey to them as usual. Piché always complains of the Piché. <sup>A cure for</sup>

(1) Ration of meat fish, pemican or corn *folle avoine*, as the case may be.

hardship of having the mollygripes continually, owing to eating fish, a common food, he says, at this *morné endroit*. He often curses from the bottom of his heart both the place and the food, and, I dare say, the Bourgeois, though I do not hear him. It is with regret he reflects on the fine times he used to have of it during the summer season at Slave Lake, where he was his own master and chose his own meat, while, here, he is neither his own master nor chooses his meat.

Upon duly weighing them, I found that Piché's complaints were just, and resolved upon redressing them. I also considered the hardship for a man of Piché's kidney (not to say his stomach) to have no other dainties than fish to satisfy its cravings with The *Grande Société* to only give him 500 livres yearly, while the Potties would give him one thousand and the same boarding! From these considerations, I gave Piché 18 lbs. of grease and 20 lbs. of pounded meat, to eat by way of desert after his fish and by way of cure for the mollygripes. Who knows, but the Company may gain this small donation back again with interest, for it is well known that the Frenchmen are more active in their employers cause with a full belly than an empty one. To keep the Frenchmen in good humour their chops, now and then, must be greased.

After Piché got the pounded meat and grease, he proved more interested than he had done since his arrival from Slave Lake. He is encamped a little further than a gun shot from Perrone's house. This night is very dark, yet his sight improved so much that he perceived a Montagner debarking at the Little Island before Perrone's house, though he assured me often that it was impossible for him to have seen Perrone going off, although the night was much brighter than it is now.

He ran immediately after the Montagner, who proved to be that d.....d thief the English Chief's brother. He accosed him

in Cree, and the Montagner, on this account, taking him one for of Perrone's lackeys, told him that his son was already arrived in their home, and that he left his wife with meat and skins for them at *Pointe aux chiens*. Piché then thought proper to discover himself in speaking in Montagner; he made the old fellow and his son come here by offering to flog them, and as soon as they set out for this post, Piché, in their canoe, went down to the *Pointe* and brought up 6 skins of dried meat and 16 skins of beaver.

As he was arriving at the *Pointe* he perceived one of the Pot ties sneaking along; he told him that if he touched any thing belonging to the Indians he would give him a sound beating for his pains; the fellow got frightened and returned.

It is very likely that if I had not understood Piché's complaints and had given him nothing, he would not have seen the Montagner going to Perrone!

This evening, Sourarda and his son arrived from *Lac Clair*. <sup>AUGUST 2nd.</sup> They are both almost naked and half starved, having thrown away every thing belonging to them, on account of the death of one of their best hunters, the *Tête de Lièvre's* gendre, who was killed last month by a buffaloe. The *Tête de Lièvre* has gone like a madman in the Athabaska River, with Marlin taking care of him as he wants to destroy himself. All the other Montagners came here, so that Mr. Porter is alone at *Lac Clair*.

Gave Sourarda a little dried meat, half spoiled, which I kept for the dogs. I did this to get rid of him, for he was since his arrival teasing me for ammunition, &c. A band of women who went to gather berries arrived this evening, and say they found none; so we will eat no berries this summer, and the Company's *Corasse* (?) shall not suffer by our extravagance that way.

.....

4th.

Laviolette has been sending daily from Mamaoui an average of 15 to 20 pieces of fish. This morning, he and the Red Knife Indian arrived, bag and baggage. At the same time the *Bœuf debout* arrived from the *Bras cassé*, and several Montagners arrived from *Lac Clair*. Dubois' comrade, a Montagner, pulled his gun from the *Bœuf debout* because, he said, the Crees threatened to kill the Montagners, but we made the Montagner return his gun to the Cree, and the latter set off immediately with  $\frac{1}{2}$  fathom of tobacco for the *Bras cassé*.

Drinking  
match  
quarrel.

I refused to send him ammunition as he has only meat; I did not chose to fire, because it is a ceremony never used in summer at this place, and I do not wish to be the first to introduce it. Soon after the Crees arrived, in all 7 men, besides women and children. Dubois' comrade continued insulting and braving them as they came along from the Potties fort. Got all their baggage put into the *hangard* and their lodges made in the fort so as to have less trouble during the drinking match. Gave them a large keg for 86 skins of provisions, and 18 meas: am: between them, for nothing.

The Montagners, to the number of 12, entered the house, where they harangued the Crees about their intention of killing Montagners, for near an hour, during which time none spoke to them but Drolet, the most cowardly of them all. At last, the *Bras cassé* spoke to this purpose.

" Since I was a young man I have been always hereabout and  
 " among the Montagners, but I never killed nor offered to kill a  
 " Montagner, nor do I mean to do it, now that I am an old man,  
 " if the Montagners leave me and my young men alone, but  
 " should the Montagners wish to cut the Crees, the Crees will  
 " cut the Montagners, for the one are not more iron proof than  
 " the other. But you, Montagners, appear ridiculous in our eyes,  
 " you continually babble to no purpose, renoting the same stu-

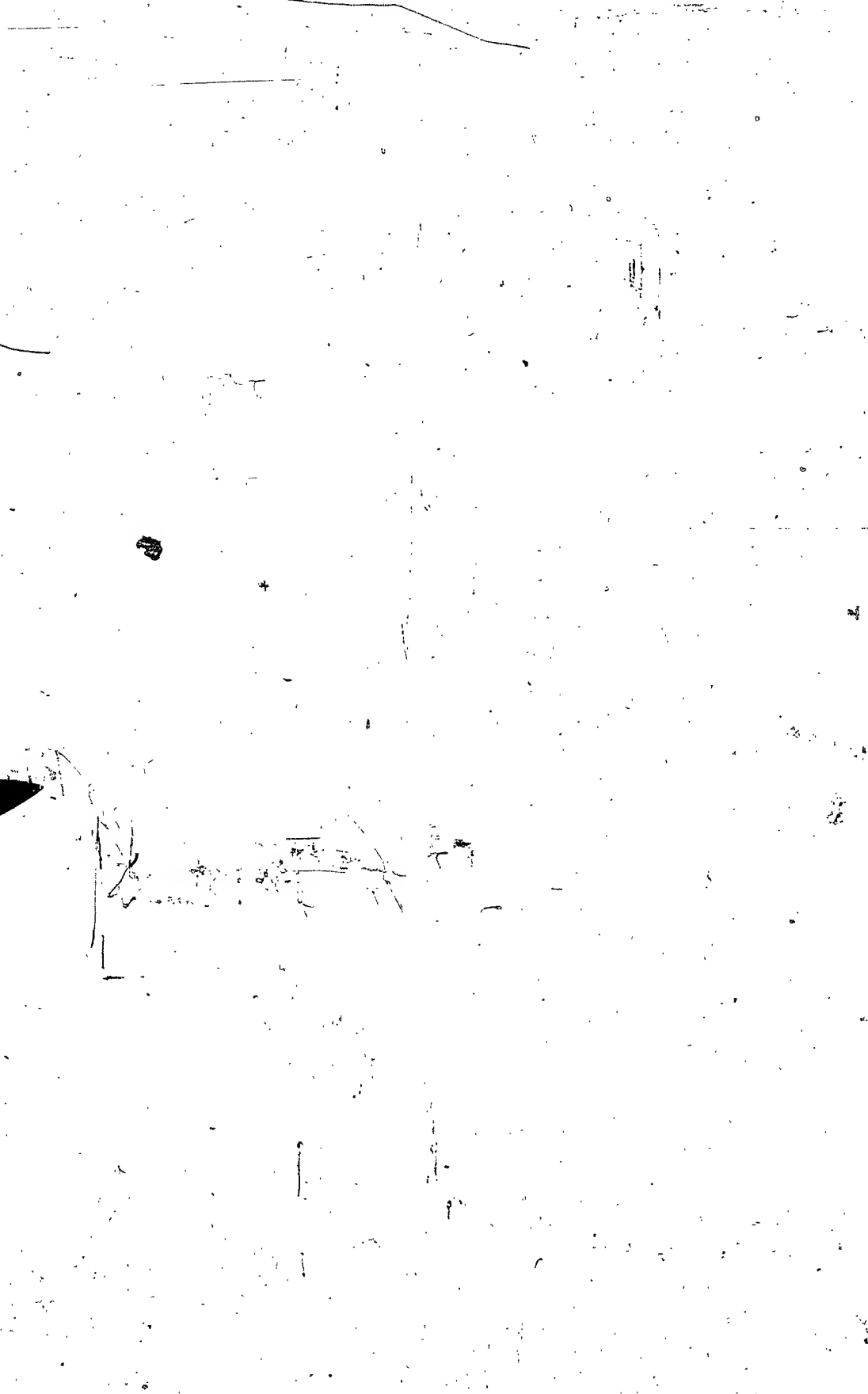
“pid stories over and over again, to the mortification of all your  
 “hearers, and if ever your mouth is stopped, it is only by the  
 “stem of a calumet. Would you do more and talk less than  
 “you do, it would be much more useful for yourselves and less  
 “troublesome to others.

The Montagner admitted the justice of all what *Bras cassé*  
 said, and the *Bras cassé* invited them to drink with him. Dubois  
 comrade growing very drunk began to make the man (1) in  
 the fort, and we were obliged to turn him out to let the others  
 see how they would be treated should they behave in the same  
 manner.....

St Cyr brought 31 pieces of fish. This evening, before sunset <sup>29th.</sup>  
 the heavens all of a sudden, became so overcast with clouds; or <sup>La grande</sup>  
 rather smoke, that it appeared like midnight, and the air so <sup>noirceur.</sup>  
 impregnated with a sulphurous smell that we found it more agre-  
 able to remain in the houses than out of doors. The night con-  
 tinued so dark that nothing could be distinguished any more  
 than in a subterraneous vault, and the Indians killed several  
 ducks with a flambeau, owing to the darkness of the night. As  
 we are not philosophers enough to attribute any other cause to  
 this sudden transition from light to darkness, and from a pure  
 to a sulphurous air, we think it may be occasioned by the irrup-  
 tion of some volcanos in the neighbourhood of this place, as the  
 Indians inform us that there are several hereabouts.

(1) *Faire l'homme.*





MR JAMES MCKENZIE

THE KING'S POSTS

AND

JOURNAL OF A CANOE JAUNT

THROUGH THE

KING'S DOMAINS

1808

THE SAGUENAY AND THE LABRADOR COAST



## I

The north shore of the Lower St Lawrence.—The Moravian Company.—The country on the sea shore.—The interior of Labrador; animals and seasons.—Anticosti.

## II

The Natives of the King's Posts.—Their complete ignorance about their origin.—Father Labrosse; his theory.—The *Nasquapis*, or Indians of the interior; their appearance, character and religion.—The "Feast of the Bear Cub", &c.—Women; courtship.—Death ceremonies.—Efforts made to christianize the Natives.—An explanation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

## III

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## THE JOURNAL

### I

Forced stay on the Ile of Orleans.—St Joachim.—Little River.—*Eboulements*.—*Ile aux Coudres*.—Murray Bay.—*Tadousac*.—The Saguenay River.—The Chaudière Falls.—*E-she-qua-ti-mi*.—Lake St John.—Ruins of a Jesuit establishment.—*Assuapmousoin*.—Lake *Mistassini*; the Hudson Bay and North-West Companies' posts.

### II

Portneuf.—The seal bank.—Post of St Jérémie.—*Manicouagan*.—Godbout.—The Seven Islands.—Mingan.—*Ile aux Perroquets*.—*Napioshibou*.—*Masquaro*.—*Natasquam*; salmon fisheries.



# JAMES M<sup>C</sup>KENZIE

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE KING'S POSTS, THE LABRADOR COAST AND  
THE ISLAND OF ANTICOSTI, BY AN INDIAN TRADER, RESIDING  
THERE SEVERAL YEARS; WITH A DESCRIPTION OF  
THE NATIVES AND THE JOURNAL OF A CANOE  
TRIP THROUGH THOSE COUNTRIES,  
BY THE SAME. (1)

## I

The North Shore of the Lower St. Lawrence.—The Moravian  
Company.—The country on the sea Shore.—The interior of  
Labrador; animals and climate.—Anticosti.

If rocks form what is commonly understood by "an iron bound shore", the north of the River St. Lawrence, from the lower end of the Island of Orleans, may be truly so called, as nothing scarcely is to be seen for hundreds of leagues but mountains, *caps* and cliffs in various shapes and figures, some of which are covered chiefly with spruce, others present their bald pates, as if deprived of their covering by the unmerciful hand of Time.

Passing *Cap Tourmente*, which is five leagues in length, the country, for twenty five leagues more, has undergone some degree of cultivation, being inhabited by Canadians, and divided into four parishes. The Little River, Bay St. Paul, *Les Eboule-*

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(1) The North-West Company were then, since several years, the lessees of the King's Posts.

*ments* and Murray Bay. The last of those parishes belonged to the King's Domains, which it furnished with beef and butter, till 1762, when General Murray, whose name it now bears, granted it to Major Nairn and Lieut. Fraser, restricting them, however, from trading with the Indians.

At present, the King's Domains extend along the coast, north-east, the distance of seventy six leagues, from the Black River, five leagues below Murray Bay, to the River Cormorant, nine leagues beyond the Seven Islands, and up the river Saguenay, in a westerly direction, the length of two hundred leagues to Lake Mistassini, reckoned half way between Hudson's Bay and the St Lawrence.

The seigniory of Mingan, commencing at the Cormorants, stretches along this rugged coast the distance of ninety leagues to the Vermilion River, which falls into the Gulf at the lower end of the Island of Anticosti.

The Island of Anticosti is fifty leagues in length, from East to West and ten in the broadest part. This seigniory, as well as that of Mingan, were granted by the French to two gentlemen of the name of Mingan and Anticosti for services rendered in war. (1) Their descendents possessing no commercial spirit, at the conquest of Canada, disposed of them to some of the first English settlers for a mere song.

The Labrador coast, beyond those seigniories, has been left unappropriated, and is a common to which all nations at peace with England may resort, unmolested, for furs, oil, codfish and salmon.

Lyburner and Crawford's seal fisheries, occupying about forty five leagues, come next, after which the coast is inhabited by Esquimaux and a mixture of English, Irish and Canadians, com-

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(1) Anticosti and Mingan Islands were conceded, in 1697 and 1680, to the Sieur de Joliette in recognition of services rendered to his country by his voyages in the West.

monly called "planters", who trade with the Eskimaux and carry on salmon and cod fisheries along the Straits of Belisle, as far as Great Esquimaux Bay.

The last settlement of which we have any knowledge, on this side of Hudsons Bay, was formed some years ago, eighty leagues farther, by a party of Dutch, who style themselves the "Moravian Company". These people pretend to have a grant from the King of forty leagues of this coast. They keep aloof from every other traders at their factory, where they have erected some elegant buildings and have a preacher of the Gospel; they exchange their commodities with the Esquimaux for oil, bears, martens, foxes. The distance of this settlement from Quebec is reckoned five hundred leagues.

The country of which I have been drawing the limits is perhaps the part the least favored by nature, in point of climate and soil, of the inhabited Globe. Men placed here have no other resource but to prey upon the inferior animals around him, for the soil, composed of moss, sand and rock, is too sterile, and the climate too cold to produce a substitute for satisfying the cravings of hunger; often does the poor miserable sinner retire to his hard cold bed without a supper, and leave it next morning without a prospect of procuring for himself and family a breakfast or a dinner.

The country on the sea shore.

Very few sights, I believe, can be more distressing to the feelings of humanity than a Labrador savage, surrounded by his wife and five or six small children, half famished with cold and hunger, in a hole dug out of the snow, and screened from the inclemency of the weather with the branches of trees. Their whole furniture is a kettle, hung over the fire, not for the purpose of cooking victuals, but melting snow.



For about fifty leagues from the shore the country is mountainous; then it becomes level and mossy, and continues so till within a few leagues of the Hudson Bay coast, where it resumes its former rough, elevated appearance.

Animals.

In the lakes and rivers, which are numerous and extensive, are found : trout, whitefish, doré, pike, *carpe*, and salmon; in the woody regions, beavers and every other animal of the fur kind are met with, if not in greater numbers, at least clothed with the richest furs which North America possesses. Carriboux are seen some years browsing in great herds on the plains and hills. The Labrador fishermen have often been known to shoot many of them from their windows. The moose deer also is an inhabitant of this country, but only in small numbers, about the River Saguenay, where the soil is rich, woody, and marshy. As porcupines, hares and partridges are found in almost every country, I need hardly say they are met with here, and, when every other resource fails, these alone afford a scanty meal to prolong the lives of the poor Indians.

In the spring and fall, the coast swarms with wild fowls, and the sea with fish, in such variety as would require the knowledge and skill of the naturalist to classify and describe, and these are the only seasons in the year in which life is enjoyed, and does not become a burden to the inhabitants of this unhallowed coast.

Climate.

The winter is long and severe; one would need to have blood like brandy, the skin of brass and the eyes of glass, not to suffer from the rigours of a Labrador winter. In the summer, the frequent fogs render the air damp, and the constant breezes from the immense fields of ice floating in the Gulf keep the land pleasantly cool, and make any alteration in the winter dress almost unnecessary.

The soil in the Island of Anticosti is said to be, in some parts, Anticosti. very fertile, but the fogs and cold, damp atmosphere which envelop this island during the summer counteract the effects of the sun, so that vegetation is slow, and wheat does not grow to maturity.

Some fine wood, among which white and red pine, grows upon it; There are some lakes and rivers abounding in salmon and trout; bears, martens and foxes are numerous. A few beavers were left on this island some years ago which multiplied very rapidly, but the Indians from Mingan having but seven leagues to cross, soon destroyed this thriving colony. Seals are so numerous that the shores of Anticosti seem to be their native place. The proprietors, however, like the dog in manger, neither hunt those animals themselves, nor allow others to do it.

Two solitary Canadians are the sole human inhabitants of this Island. They are settled with their families on the western end, and raise a sufficiency on their farms *pour faire la soupe*.

I have been told that hemp grows here. Good harbours are scarce about Anticosti, which no ship approaches in stormy weather with impunity, and without running great risk of being totally wrecked upon its hidden rocks and shoals.

The Natives of the King's Posts.—Their complete ignorance about their origin.—Father Labrosse : his theory.—The *Nasquapis*, or Indians of the interior : their appearance, character and religion.—The "Feast of the Bear Cub," &c.—Women ; courtship.—Death ceremonies.—Efforts made to christianize the Natives.—An explanation of the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

The Natives ; their origin.

I have now come to that part of my narrative in which, as a traveller, I conceive it my duty to give you some account of the Natives of the country I have been describing, and to introduce you, with all respect and due decorum, to our princes and princesses of ragged fame.

In the course of my peregrinations, the Natives of the Kings Posts are the only tribes of savages I found who live in such perfect ignorance and indifference about their origin as to have no traditional account whatever handed down to them to assist in clearing up the rubbish from this obscure point.

I have questioned many of the most knowing among them upon this important subject, but a vacant stare conveyed all the answer I could obtain to my enquiry, save from one old man at Mingan, who said that all he knew, or cared to know concerning his forefathers' descent, was that he had heard they came from *Masquaro*, or Bear's Tail, the last post on the Mingan seigniory.

This sage, however, unites in his own person a civil and ecclesiastical employ, being chief of Mingan and a member of

the Church. His long and solemn visage is adorned with one optic only, having lost the other, not, as it might be presumed, in gazing on the heavenly bodies, nor, like King Philip of old, in battle, by the arrow of his enemy, (for one eyed Joseph is equally averse to study and war,) but in grappling with the sweet partner of his bed, at a moment when the fumes of strong liquor had driven his small stock of reason from its seat, in the upper story, and she, with a dexterity peculiar to her sex in the use of her defensive weapons, soon scratched the eye from poor Joseph's phiz.

But, to return to the main object, since the Indians themselves can furnish us with no documents to trace their origin, we are left to wonder in the unlimited wilderness of conjecture, and probably may get nearer the truth by comparing the features, customs and language of the different nations and tribes together, than by one of their own fabulous stories. My part of the task is to transmit you as faithful a sketch as possible of the original before me, by the resemblance of which to other portraits of the same kind in your possession, you may likely discover whether they be descendants of Sem, Cham or Japhet, or of a dog, like the Chipewyans of Athabaska.

*Père Labrosse*, a learned Jesuit, maintained that when Salomon formed the design of building the famous temple of Jerusalem, he despatched a vessel to every known part of the globe for artists and materials. One of those vessels was driven by a storm on the coast of this vast continent, and the crew, unable, from their ignorance of navigation, to trace their way back, landed and were its first inhabitants. He observed a similarity in the looks, disposition, manner of life and religious rites of the Indians to those of the Israelites, who were swarthy, so are the Indians; they were ungrateful, so are the Indians; they

Father Labrosse.

were rebellious and idolators, so are the Indians; they offered sacrifices to the Supreme Being, so do the Indians; they wandered about in tents, so do the Indians, &c.

Father Labrosse lived twenty-five years as missionary in the King's Post, and there are now twenty years since the good man took his flight for the world of spirits. He had some chirographical skill which saved the life, at one time, of Iris's servant maid, who had been making too free with the blacksmith of Tadousac. He had also some poetical talents, and composed a song upon his favorite dog, which began thus:

*Jupiter par la vieillesse  
N'a plus de poil aux fesses.*

The Indians of the King's Post and Labrador are Crees, originally from Hudson's Bay, and differ but little in their dress, manners and language from the *Têtes de Boule* of the River St Maurice and Temiscamingue. They are divided into two tribes the *Nasapees*, or inland Indians and the *Montagners*, or shore Indians.

The  
*Nasapees.*

The *Nasapees* may still be regarded as the primitive inhabitants of the coast, whose ancient habits, usages and absurdities they, to this day, retain in all their savage purity.

They lead a wandering life through the bare, flat parts of the country, subsist chiefly upon the flesh, and clothe themselves with the skin of the caribou, which they catch in snares or shoot with the bow and arrow, an exercise in which they are very expert. They resort with their bear, martin, fox, and caribou skins once a year, either to Hudson's Bay, Great Esquimaux Bay, or the King's Post, to exchange them for the most necessary articles, such as axes, knives, guns, ammunition, &c. Their number is about five hundred souls, and there are some among them

who have grown old without having ever seen an European, and who still form their utensils out of bones and stone.

The Nascapees are generally above the middle size, slender, and long shanked, their cheeks jutting out remarkably make the contour of the face incline to the oval. The eyes are black, the nose rather flat, mouth capacious, lips thick, the teeth white, the hair rough and black, and the complexion, of a beautiful frog colour, gives a last touch to this antic figure.

The men dress in a capot, *brayet* and leggins of carribou skin, prepared in the hair, which they wear, at all seasons, next to skin; the outside is painted in various fantastic figures of different colours which they extract from wood and herbs, and the shoulders decorated with *épaulettes* made of beads, porcupine and goose quills. They carry the hair behind the head, around which—leaving the crown bare,—they wear a strap of cloth or beads fastened close behind and dangling to the hips. But, when they wish to look fierce, the ordinary covering for the head is the skin of the bear's head in the state it was worn by the shaggy owner. Thus accoutered, with the addition of his bow and quiver, his stone axe and bow knife, a Nascapée possesses no small degree of national pride and self importance.

Their dress  
and ap-  
pearance.

The dress of the women consists of a conical cap, a robe with detached sleeves, which is belted around the waist and hangs from the shoulder to half the leg, leggins, and shoes of carribou-skin. They bundle the hair on each side of the head. Both sexes tatoo their cheeks and grease their faces; the men pluck their beard from the root.

These people, though naturally timid, are treacherous, when provoked. Like most savages, they are indolent, till want spurs them to action. They are great thieves, but trusty when property is left in their charge, and they hold a liar in detesta-

Character.

tion. Their having no intercourse with Europeans, prevents them from adopting any of their vices, and their desire for spirituous liquors is among the weakest of their passions. But they are libidinous and accused of sodomy.

**Religion.** They believe in a "Great Spirit" who made the earth and the Nascapeses, and in an inferior deity, who made the different kinds of wild animals, and distributed them among the Indians in proportion to their merits and the fervency of their prayers. This God is, therefore, adored whenever the belly feels concerned. He is not longer than their little finger, is dressed in white and called *Ka-wab-api-shit*, or the White Spirit.

They believe also in an evil spirit, who is a busy meddling body, forever planning mischief to counteract the good works of *Ka-wab-api-shit*, on which account they always implore him to have mercy on them, and, since he has not the power, any more than the will, to do them good, at least to do them no harm.

As for the "Great Being", they never worship him, because, being all goodness, he has not the power, and it would be against his nature, to do them any mischief, and will do, them all the good he can without being teased into it. When they die, they think they are to go to a place where they will enjoy all the sensual pleasures of this life.

**Conjurors.** Next to their gods, the Nascapeses hold in the highest veneration their conjurors, who act in the double capacity of priest and physician, and not only intercede for them with the Good and Bad Spirit but, likewise, restore health to their sick. When one of these enters the place of worship prepared for his reception, with a rattle in his hand and a stick across in his mouth, the most silent awe reigns around him, and the most sanguine expectations are formed by the beholders of the success of the

magicians skill in petitioning the God of animals and in scaring the Devil.

He is no sooner seated in his "temple," than the country resounds with the noise of his rattles and singing, which is composed of a repetition of "*Ya-tat-shis shiku-unie-kui, Ya-tat-shis she ku unie kui—Ki-ka-ka-ui shi shi ka ma ni, ki ka ka ui she ka ma ni.*—Great master of animals among the clouds bless us, and let us continue to make as good a hunt as usual."

After he has worked himself into convulsions by his contortions and howlings till rivulets of perspiration trickle from his naked body, he cries in a sort of ecstasy, "He comes—He comes,—I see him, I see him,—he is dressed very fine." Then the spell is over, the charm complete, and the good doctor, after recovering his exhausted spirits, relates to the anxious bystanders his conversation with *Ka-wab-api-shit*, what success may be expected in the chase; and how he has concluded a treaty of peace with their common enemy, the Devil.

In his medical capacity, this man administers no other medicine to effect a cure than singing and blowing on the part affected and sucking it, the intention of which is to counteract the machinations of their enemies, who, through their conjurers and at the instigation of the Devil, they believe, cause every misfortune which may befall them, such as famine, sickness and death.

This man never travels without his bag, which he carries about with much reverential awe, as it contains all the apparatus of his art and, among the rest, a cub bear's skin painted, a bark dish and some other trash, to which he attaches superstitious notions, and which he dedicates to *Ka-wab-api-shit*.

Of all animals, the bear is regarded with the greatest reverence and respect among the Nascapes. The skin of the first cub they

The Feast  
of the Bear  
Cub.



kill in the hunting season being striped entire from the carcass, is stuffed with hay, and the head and paws decorated with beads, quills and vermilion. The blood, entrails and flesh are next cooked, and all the people of the horde are invited to partake of it in honour of *Kawabapishit*, to whose paternal bounty they owe the luscious meal. In the centre of the feast the skinny deity is placed, grinning while the drum beats, and the guests devour the flesh in silence. The bones being torn from the flesh, or rather the flesh from the bones, they are, with much ceremony, suspended to a *Mai* (1), which has been previously erected for that purpose.

Should a dog, amid all this religious mummerly, be sacrilegious enough to pass any of the fat or flesh between his unhallowed jaws, in order to appease the wrath of the angry deity, the vile animal is instantly slaughtered, the flesh is devoured and each guest must eat a teaspoonful of his excrements, and then the bones are hung to a tree.

Hunting  
feasts

As the fall of the leaves is the beginning of the hunting season, they meet at a sumptuous feast so as to bid each other adieu, communicate what they mean to do, &c. They have another feast in the spring, in order to congratulate one another on their different successes and exploits in the chase, on which occasions their tents, which are generally made small and in the shape of a sugar loaf for the accommodation of a family or two, are now made capacious enough to contain the people of a whole tribe, and in the form of the roof of a house placed on the ground.

In this spacious hall those good folks eat and drink, caper and grunt, until tired, but what affords the greatest fund of merriment and loud peals of laughter is the unexpected, though not unwelcome, report from a *leather gun*, and the wit of the comp-

(1) *Arbre de Mai*. Flagpole.

any is displayed in the different construction put upon the purport of the messenger's visit.

They all dance together, the women on one side and the men on the other side of the wigwam, while the greatest man beats the drum and sings, to which they keep time, a very easy matter, as the musician keeps continually repeating the same note, the dancers hopping the same step and grunting at every jerk like so many hungry pigs.

An unmarried woman must never touch a Nascapée's gun, this would offend the god of animals and render the gun useless. When a girl comes to the age of puberty, her mother, ever careful of the daughters moral character, erects a hut for her, where she must remain excluded from the other sex for three days, her face besmeared with grease, and a cap on her head, to which are suspended (over the eyes,) strings of beads or leather to prevent her from seeing a man during this first merry period of her existence. The term of her seclusion being over, she returns among her friends, but continues, till married, to eat out of the same bark dish which she used during her confinement, and if any other person, by chance or otherwise, should have the misfortune to touch it, this would be considered as the prelude to some very great calamity, to the whole nation.

In their courtship, the young men throw small sticks at the objects of their choice: should the latter return the compliment, it is a favorable reception, if not, it is a tacit hint to search their fortune elsewhere. It is also a common method for the young man to leave his blanket in the father of his beloved's tent. If the match be disapproved of, he finds on his return the blanket spread outside of the door, but if it is agreeable to all parties, he finds the blanket spread near his bride and the next and last scene to be acted is to consummate the nuptials.

A Nascabee will take as many wives as he can maintain, and so far from discovering any symptoms of jealousy for the unequal distribution of favors, those females call one another by the kind name of sisters. It is perfectly understood and agreed between both sexes that the women were designed by the Great Spirit to drudge, and the men, for the noble exercise of providing for their families by means of their bows and arrows.

Death  
ceremonies

As soon as a Nascabee dies, the survivors set up the jowl, fire a shot to frighten away the evil spirit which killed him, and light torches, even in day light, around the corpse, which is soon after interred with his utensils and wearing apparel, a necessary precaution, they think, to facilitate his journey to that country whence no traveller ever returns. The absent relatives are acquainted with this melancholy event by blackening the bark of a tree and leaving the branches bent over it like the weeping willow. Every relation who passes, were it twenty years afterwards, strews the grave with green boughs as a mark of respect for the memory of his departed friend. They mourn by wearing the hair loose, and fastening the strings of the deceased's shoes round their wrist.

They reckon time by moons and nights, and they amuse themselves by draughts and the game of the *Crosse*.

Travelling.

Their snow-shoes are made nearly in the shape of a guitar. Those who inhabit the plain, flat part of the country make them turned up at both ends and laced only in the middle. They make their canoes like the Crees of Athabasca, and so they do their sledges, which are hauled by dogs and by themselves when those animals are scarce. In summer, they make the dogs lug along their filthy goods across their back in such huge heaps that, at a little distance off, neither the head, paws or tail are

discernible, so that those wretched brutes may be mistaken for moving hillocks.

In common with the rest of the ancient inhabitants of this continent, the Nascapees are in all their habits of body filthy and nasty in the extreme. Their garments swarm with vermin, which they eat as fast as they can catch.

Free from their infancy, however, from restraint, and forced, early, to think and act for themselves, they acquire much cunning and sagacity in whatever may concern their own manner of life, and if we can find among them none who can please the eye by their cleanliness, yet, we meet with some who are endowed with sufficient natural sense to puzzle the *savant*.

Attempts have been made by missionaries to convert such as <sup>Missionaries.</sup> have come within their reach, but it has been hard to teach tricks to an old dog, and no less so is it to convince a Nascapee that our notions of religion are preferable to his own, which have been taught him by his parents, and instilled into him by long habits. However absurd these may appear to us, it is certain ours seem no less so to them. There are on the coast Nascapees who have not only their wives' daughters, but even their own daughters, for wives.

Some years ago, a priest wishing to explain to one of those <sup>The Nas-</sup> Indians the principles of religion, among other important tenets, <sup>quapi and</sup> told him that in God there were three different persons, the <sup>the "Holy</sup> Father, the Son and the Holy-Ghost, and, yet, that these three <sup>Trinity."</sup> different Persons were in reality the same and made but one. The Indian, struck with this seeming paradox, begged the Reverend Father to explain his meaning more clearly, for he could not conceive how the son could be as old as the father. The priest, taken off his guard by the unexpected objection, said it

it was a mystery in his religion which he was bound to believe without thoroughly understanding it. "Well," said the man of Nature, "since you have not sense enough to explain the doctrine you advance, I shall offer you my opinion on it," on which, folding the skirt of his *capot* in three, he said: "Look *Patriache*"—so they call the priest—"these three folds of *caribou* are different in number but the same in size, quality and age, yet, you see," pulling them asunder, "they make in reality but one."

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The "Montagners," or Shore Indians; their contact with the whites.—Their persons, habits and dress.—Civilities.—Distribution of rum and bread on festive days.—Women—Indifference to sufferings and death.—Diseases.—Language and degree of instruction.—Vocabulary.

The Montagners, or Shore Indians, are about four hundred in number. They are Christians, and a priest passes amongst them once every summer in order to christen, marry, confess, &c. for which the lessees allow him a salary of fifty guineas and his travelling expenses; but they have as yet benefited very little by his precept and good example, for in them we find concentrated all the vices of the whites and Nascapes, without one of their virtuous qualities. Indolence, ingratitude, malice, stubbornness and a propensity to drinking, stealing, lying and trickery. In a word, let us view them on whatever side, or through which ever mediums we please, we shall find them neither one thing nor the other, neither Nascapes nor whites, but, like the mule between the horse and the ass, a spurious breed between both, and a melancholy instance of the influence of European manners upon the morals of the wild inhabitants of the woods.

Effect of  
their inter-  
course with  
the whites.

This heterogenous and most wretched species of the human race passes the summer along the coast, either to steal or to trade a bottle of their only god, rum, and they spend the winter in a half starved state between the sea shore and the interior, pil-

Their per-  
sons habits  
and dress.

laging wrecks or any thing else which the waves cast in their way, and killing a few stragling beavers, martens or otters.

Being enervated by their slothful habits, too free of indulgence in the use of spirituous liquors and in debaucheries of every kind, their minds are stupid, their persons diminutive, and their constitutions weak. The features of most of them resemble those of Europeans, but on sundays and holidays, the only times they undergo a thorough scrubbing and the real colour of their skin is visible, their faces look as if they had jaundice.

The men imitate the Canadians in their dress, and tie their black bristly hair in thick greasy *queues* behind their head.

The only difference between a Nascapée and a Montagner woman's dress is that the former dresses in leather and the latter in cloth, with the addition of a shawl tied with an elegant knot to conceal her tempting beauties from the roguish eye. The less prudish matron, when suckling her hungry child, is less fearful of public gaze; an unprepossessing sight, at best.

Their caps, in the shape of a priest's mitre, are made of red and blue second cloth, the seams and rim of which are ornamented with beads and ribands, fancifully put on. Their robes, made of red or blue cloth and with detached sleeves, hang from the shoulder to the ankle and are wrapped tight around the waist by a belt of the same cloth but of different colour, so that their shapes are plainly seen.

Their sleeves are made of calico; they suspend crosses with ribands to their neck, and their stockings are of scarlet cloth, trimmed with beads and riband, which, if we add their matted hair in oily clubs over the ears, makes a truly grotesque figure.

Neither men nor women wear a blanket over their shoulders like our Indians. In cold weather, the former double their ordinary clothes, and the latter fasten a petticoat *à la française*

round their loins, and stuff the upper part of their robes with rags and clouts till they have no better shape than an Egyptian mummy.

The manner of salutation among them is a shake of the hand, with a buss on the middle and another on each side of the mouth. The women give the *bourgeois* their hand, accompanied with a certain jerk of the body like that caused by an electric shock. The men present him some seal skins and furs; in return for such marks of affection and civility, more than the value in rum is expected, and always punctually paid. Civilities.

Every Montagner who marries is entitled, from an ancient usage, to a loaf of bread and a bottle of rum, immediately after the ceremony has taken place. A bottle of rum, is always given also gratis for every hhd: of oil they trade at the posts. On Sunday, bread and rum are distributed among them as a reward for going to church. It is likewise customary to entertain them with bread, pork, rum and tobacco on every great *Fete* which happens in the course of the year, which causes them to loiter about the posts, or travel many leagues in the depth of winter, for the sake of a belly full. The bottle of rum and the loaf of bread.

But the grandest feast of all is given to them, once a year, after the return with their spring hunt. Nothing is spared on this occasion to complete those poor people's happiness for a couple of days, and rum is liberally bestowed. The "spring hunt feast"

To this banquet the chief pays the clerk and men of the post the compliment of an invitation. The tent is pitched like that of the Nascapes on such occasions. The men and women sit and dance on opposite sides, the "Great Man" sings and beats the drum, which, when he feels tired, he hands to the next in rank and quality, and every one of the company utters a groan by way of thanks for the favor conferred on them.



All this time, the Clerk, or *Hogima*, is treated with all possible civility and respect, being seated in the centre of the tent, on a chair, with a table covered with the choicest viands *nicely* cooked before him, and the chief on his right doing the honors of the table with Adam's knives and forks, while the pipe and the bottle pass briskly around the circle, and convivial conversation begins to be pretty clamorous.

As soon as decency will permit, and the Canadian chief has regaled all his senses with the scene before him, he retires, honored by a volley of fire arms and the thanks of his company, expressed by a heavy groan all round.

**Marriages.** Immediately after the priest has performed the marriage ceremony at the altar, the married couple repair, still holding each other by the hand, to the person in charge of the post, on whose lips each bestows three smacks, in return for which he gives them a bottle of rum and a loaf of bread. With this they make merry among their friends, and as soon as the fumes of the liquor have heated their brain and armed them with courage, they harass him out of his five senses for more, to celebrate this memorable day.

This day of merriment and rejoicing being over, and this lovely pair launched into the tempestuous ocean of married life, the husband attends to the important duties of hunting, and the wife to her domestic affairs. Much harmony reigns between them till a false step of hers alarms his delicate sentiments of honour, and drives him for redress into the arms of another. Thus, frequently, hymen's knot is for ever dissolved.

**The women.**

The ladies of His Majesty's Posts, whether married or unmarried, young or old, are, it must be confessed, much inclined to gaiety. Their ideas of chastity are so confined as scarcely to

exist, and their conscience in their respect is as elastic as silk stockings.....

The men, aware of this disposition, and naturally jealous, watch them very closely, particularly in drinking frolics. Though fond of rum, to an uncommon excess, some of them keep sober to guard the motions of their wives and daughters, but, at the same time, they carry on intrigues of their own with those of their neighbours, for they, no more than their dear ribs, are very punctual in observing the tenth commandment.

The Montagner shows an unnatural indifference for the loss of those who ought to be most dear to them. The parent loses his child, the child loses his parent, without regret or a tear, except when rum is so plentiful within as to stream from their eyes.

Indifference to sufferings and death.

This must not be ascribed to thinking heads but to unfeeling hearts and to the state of insensibility into which they are plunged by the too immoderate use of spirituous liquors, which appear to have the same benumbing effects upon their faculties which opium has upon those of the Orientals.

To do them justice, however, they are equally indifferent under personal sufferings, owing, perhaps, to the like cause and to their being insensible of danger for the rufous countenance of a doctor never increases their apprehension and they leave this life with as little struggle as they come into it

They carry their dead to be interred in consecrated ground at the expense of the Bourgeois, and the priest, when he passes, performs the funeral service. Those who die at a distance and without relations to perform the last duty more decently are, the moment they expire, huddled into a hole.

They bestow presents of furs annually upon the Church, the quantity and quality of which are, like the sincerity of the sailor's

prayers in a storm, in proportion to the degree of danger they are in from famine, sickness or death.

**Diseases.**

Their organs are so constructed as to absorb every pestilential disease floating in the air, or communicated to them by the crews of wrecks and the inhabitants of the adjacent parishes. In 1802, the small pox made a great havoc among them, and so did the measles, in 1810. The venereal disorder gains ground fast, and fevers are common. The diseases occasioned by their own filthy and exposed mode of living are; colds, jaundice, rhatisme, consumption, ulcers and a loathsome disorder which swells them like bladders and causes nauseous eruptions to grow on the skin, which makes them look scaly; they seem as snugly lodged within this coat of mail as a trutle within its shell.

**Language and degree of instruction.**

The most of them speak, or rather murder, the French language, and read, write and correspond in their own. They form their letters after print, make their pens of wood and their ink of the bark of the willow, boiled into a gluey consistence with a black freestone found along the shore. They excel in singing hymns, and such as sing in church understand the notes which enable them to sing correctly. The priests have translated no other books into their language than the catechism and the common prayer book, which countain all the learning of these half formed men.

**Their weapons and their mode of hunting.**

Their tents, snowshoes, sledges and canoes are made like those of the Nascapées; they also amuse themselves and reckon their time in the same manner. The bow and arrow appear to be out of use among them; some of them are found to be good shots, but an incredible quantity of ammunition is squandered by them in the year upon wild fowls and seals.

They shoot the latter out of their canoes in the months of December, January, March, June and July. As they do not understand trenching the beaver lodges in winter, they either shoot them or catch them in steel traps every fall and spring.

This chief article of trade is provisions; the lessees' stores support them for nine months out of the twelve, and in spite of all the precautions that can be taken to prevent their starving, they suffer a great deal from hunger every winter, some even die before they can reach the post.

Though codfish, salmon, trout, &c. are plentiful during the summer season, it is very singular that these Indians will sooner want than fish. When they have a sore throat they fancy a fish is the cause of it, and, to get rid of it, they fasten a strip of net round their necks. <sup>Their aversion for fish.</sup>

When they have nothing to eat, they say "*Il fait noir*," but in the spring of the year, when they swallow in plenty of wild fowls and no longer stand in need of the assistance of the company's stores, they kick up their heels and fire a broadside for the *Bourgeois*, one of the Clerk and another for the *crigagés*.

VOCABULARY of the language spoken by the Nascapees and Montagners inhabiting the King's domains and Labrador Coast.

God.....	T-She-ma-ni-too.
Father.....	U-ta-ai.
Mother.....	U-ka-ni.
Son.....	U-ku-shishe.
Daughter.....	U-ta-nishe.
Brother.....	Nishe-teche
Sister.....	Nirmshe.
Husband.....	Nenapine.

Wife.....	Nih-she-kui-me.
Boy.....	Nape-she.
Girl.....	I-spe-kui-shishe.
Child.....	A-wa-she.
Man.....	Napen.
Woman.....	I-she-kué.
Head.....	U she-ti-ku-an.
Face.....	U-ta-she-ta-mik.
Nose.....	Ut-she.uné.
Nostrils.....	U-le-ti-kune.
Eyes.....	U-t-she-she-kue.
Eye brows.....	Mi-chi-a-la-nanne.
Ear.....	U-ta-u-gué.
Forehead.....	Ta-ku-ethe-u-she-tu-kan.
Hair.....	U-she-te-ku-an-ku-un.
Cheek.....	U-ta-che-ta-mik.
Mouth.....	Ue-tune.
Throat.....	U-ku-ta-she-kui.
Lips.....	U-tas-u-toone.
Teeth.....	U-i-bite.
Tongue.....	U-te-li-ni.
Beard.....	U-ta-she-ta mick-a-pieu.
Neck.....	U-ku-yat-she.
Shoulder } .....	Ut-She-Koon.
Elbow } .....	
Arm.....	U-she-pe-toone.
Hand } .....	U-til-shi.
Fingers } .....	
Nails.....	U-shi-ka-shin.
Breast.....	Ne-she-kat-shi-gan.
Belly.....	U-a teye.
Bark.....	Ni-spi-squan.
Feet.....	Ni-shit.

Knee.....	Nit-shi-kune.
Heart.....	U-te.
Stomach.....	U-shi-kat-shi-kane.
Blood.....	U-mi-kui.
Milk.....	Tu-tu-she-na-pu.
Skin.....	U-sha-ge-u.
Flesh.....	U-yashe.
Bones.....	U-she-kan.
Hearing.....	Peta-gun.
Sight.....	Shi-ti-shua-nu.
Taste.....	Kut-shi-ta-gan.
Smell.....	Mi-la-ta.
Touch.....	Tat-shi-na.
Voice.....	A-ya-mi.
Speech.....	A-ra-mi-ta-ku-shin.
Name.....	U-shi-ni-ka-shu.
Scream.....	Ta-pu-an-nu.
Noise.....	Na-no-ta-ku-shu-na-niu.
Cry.....	Ayaskiguan.
Tears.....	Mane.
Laughter.....	Papi-uan.
Sneezing.....	Nita-timi-kune.
Scratching.....	Mama-ta-ui.
Trembling.....	Nana-batu.
Singing.....	Nika-mune.
Lying.....	Kathshi-la-si-une.
Standing.....	Nepa-ui-ta.
Sitting.....	A-pi.
Going.....	Mat-she.
Sleep.....	Ni-pa-nui.
Dream.....	Pa-ua-min.
Jump.....	Kua-shi-ku-te-u.
Running.....	Uit-sha-ui.

Dancing.....	Ni-mi-run
Holding.....	Matshi-ku-ne.
Love.....	Shat-shi-a.
Hate.....	She-kat-shi-a.
Glad.....	Mi-run-e-ri-tane.
Joy.....	Iri-ne-me-ru-e-ri-tan.
Sorrow.....	Nashi-ta-mi-ri-tune.
Pain.....	A-ku-shi-une.
Trouble.....	Nastamin.
Lazy.....	I-shi-ti-mi.
I.....	Ni.
Thou.....	Tshir.
He.....	We-la.
Ye.....	Ki-la-ua.
They.....	Wi-la-ua.
To eat.....	Mitshu.
To drink.....	Mi-ni-ku-an.
To carry.....	Uen-tshi-n-tauni.
To throw.....	Ui-bin.
To cut.....	Thi-mi-shin.
To hide.....	Ka-ta.
To beat.....	Ma-shit-she.
To work.....	A-tu-se-un.
We.....	Nilanne.
Birth.....	Iri-niu.
Race.....	Ara-shi-ri-ni-ou.
Marriage.....	Ni-ba-ui-ni-lu.
Widow.....	Shi-ka.
Life.....	Iri-ni-uin-ni-la.
Body.....	Ui-yo.
Soul.....	Ut-atsha-ku-shi.
Death.....	Nipu-uin-lu.
Age.....	Sja-sha-yes-shi.

Youth.....	U-she-nat she-un
Big.....	Mi-shi-the-shi
Small.....	Ape-shishe.
High.....	I-she-pa-na-she.
Low.....	Ta-la-pa-na-shu.
Cold.....	Thi-shine.
Warm.....	Thi-shi-leu.
Stupid.....	A pie-ili-pua-kätshe.
Wise.....	Kat-shi-ta-ue-le-tok.
Strong.....	Shutshi.
Weak.....	A-pu-shutshi.
Thin.....	Pa-pa-ka-shu.
Thick.....	T-shis-pa-ka
Broad.....	A-la-gaska.
Narrow.....	Sha-ka-ua-shu.
White.....	Ua-ban
Black.....	Ka-shi-teu.
Red.....	Mi-ku-au.
Green.....	We-sha-wa-u.
Blue.....	Kai-shi-té.
Yellow.....	Ui-sha-na.
Sun.....	Pechime-Thishek.
Moon.....	Pechime-Ti-be-shi-ka.
Star.....	Ala-ku-she.
Sky.....	Tshu-maru-lu-te ta-pi-an.
Fog.....	Pe-teshe-kanne.
Clouds.....	Kas-ka-uen.
Wind.....	Lu-tin.
Blowing.....	T-shi-shi-lu-tin.
Storm.....	Irimi-usham-madshat-shika.
Rain.....	Thi-mi-uin.
Thaw.....	Kni-mits-hu-be-ru.
Thunder.....	Uni-mit-shu.



Lightning.....	Wa-wa-shite.
Snow.....	Cone.
Ice.....	Mishicumi.
Fire.....	She-ku-teu.
Light.....	Ua-ban.
Shadow.....	A-ku-atsh.
Dark.....	Tebeshi-ka.
Day.....	Tshi-shika.
Morning.....	T-shi-pajatshi.
Evening.....	Ue-takith shi.
North East.....	Mā-mit-shi.
North West.....	Sha-nen-lutin.
Summer.....	Ni-pi ni.
Winter.....	Pi-pu-ne.
Autumn.....	Ta-ku-atshi.
Spring.....	Mi-ru-she-ka-mitshe.
Year.....	Pi-patché.
Water.....	Nipi.
Sea.....	Ui-nipi-q
Lake.....	Sha-ka-i-gan.
River.....	Shi-pi-shi.
Island.....	Mene-shetiku.
Land.....	Le-gau.
Clay.....	Uabatou-niske.
Hill.....	Pinasi-niska.
Shore.....	Na-ta-gu-ne.
Mountain.....	Uatshi.
Rock.....	T-shi t-shi-ga.
Iron.....	Pi-ua-hishe.
Weeds.....	Maska-shu.
Trees.....	Mina-shi-kua.
Bark.....	Ua-lat-shiske.
Branch.....	Uti-ku-an.

Flower.....	Va-bi-ku-ne.
Beast.....	A-ni-shishe.
Fish.....	Na-meshe.
Worms.....	Maii-toochi.
Frog.....	T-nishi-pi-mit-she.
Mouse.....	Apikushishe.
Goose.....	Wa-bishi-kua.
Duck.....	I-rini-ship.
Feathers.....	Mi-ku-anne.
Eggs.....	Ua-uo.
Nest.....	U-This-tane.
Hut.....	Mitchu-ah.
Door.....	She-kua-tem.
Hearth.....	Ast she.
Hatchet.....	U-she-las ku.
Knife.....	Mo-couman.
Building.....	A-she tu-ru-in.
Clothes.....	Ma-ni-tu-ue-gane.
Rain.....	The-mi-nii.
War.....	Nan-to-bu-rii.
Quarrel.....	Nashe-ta-mi-ba-ri-ut-che.
Fighting.....	Mashi-kag-ga-uin.
Spear.....	Ani tu-gan.
Guard.....	Shi-ma-ga-niss.
Victory.....	Mat-shi-kua-ka-nu.
Distress.....	Kat-chi-to-ma-uine.
Friend.....	Ni-ka-nishe.
Enemy.....	Mat-shi-iri-ni-uetchi.
Servant.....	Co-pa-nishe.
Chief.....	Utshe-ma.
Writing.....	Mashj-paitche.
One.....	Peiogue.
Two.....	Nishoo.

Three.....	Nishetoo.
Four.....	Ne-oua.
Five.....	Pete-tishe.
Six.....	Nikute-washiche.
Seven.....	Nechouache-che.
Eight.....	Nichoo-ochi.
Nine.....	Pe-ic-kué-she-té.
Ten.....	Ni-koo-too-reni-oo.
Twenty.....	Ni-Shoo-ri-ni-oo.
Thirty.....	Ni-shé-too-ri-ni oo.
Forty.....	Ne-oua-ri-ni-a-oo.
Begining.....	Pitshe-rique.
Ending.....	Matshi-telle.
Yes.....	Hu hu.
No.....	Nu-ma.
Before.....	Niche-tam.
After.....	Pa-touche.
Here.....	E-Kue-te.
There.....	Ma-koo-wes.
Yesterday.....	A-ya-wichi-ta-koo-shishe.
To-day.....	A nootche-kashigatt.
To-morrow.....	Wa-batshe.
Look.....	Wabata.
When.....	Tan-es-he-pitche.
Where.....	Tau-té.
What.....	Te kuan.
Who.....	A-wenne.
With what.....	Thsi-koo-a-riou.
Under.....	Ta-peohishe.
Upon.....	Ta-kootche.
January.....	Tshipishime..... The great moon.
February...	Epiché-na-mas-kui Pishime... Snow falls from the leaves.

March.....	Mitsu	Pishime.....	Eagle moon.
April.....	Nishique	" .....	Bustard moon.
May.....	Uabikum	" .....	Budding moon.
June.....	Ui-sha-ku	" .....	Rutting moon.
July.....	Pinauéu	" .....	Moulted moon.
August.....	Ushé-kau	" .....	Carribou horns cast their moss.
September..	Uatshétshi	" .....	The leaf turns yellow.
October ...	Penatshi	" .....	The leaf falls.
November..	Takuatche	" .....	The fall month.
December..	T-Shé-pa-peu	" .....	The hard or severe month.

# A JOURNAL

OF A JAUNT THROUGH THE KING'S DOMAIN,  
MINGAN SEIGNORY &c. IN THE  
SUMMER OF 1808.

## I

Having been advised for the benefit of my health, after a serious illness at Quebec, to go and breathe the purer country air, and being at the same time willing to acquit myself of a duty imposed upon me by the North-West Company to manage their affairs in the King's Posts and Mingan seignory, I set out on a tour to these posts in a large birch canoe, with four men, on the 29th July.

The wind and tide being strong against us, we were forced to put ashore on the north of the Island of Orléans, eight leagues below Quebec, where a north-east gale detained us three days. The inhabitants, seeing our tents and canoe from a distance, took us for Micmacs and kept aloof, as they stood in great awe of those savages who, it seems, were in the habit of committing depredations among them.

The next day, however, they discovered their mistake and flocked around us with as much curiosity as might be shown by the inhabitants of Nootka Sound on their first seeing white people. They were very civil and pressed us much to accompany them to their houses, but as we entertained nearly the same opinion of them as they did of the Micmacs, we did not like

to leave our baggage. I could not, however, resist the pressing invitation of a young man, who, on the part of his father, had come the distance of a league to invite me to dinner.

We repaid all the hospitality shown us on this island with drams and seal skin *blagues*, which were thankfully accepted and, at last, drew more customers to our standard than we had wherewithal to satisfy.

The Isle of Orleans is eight leagues in length. The soil being dry and sandy, peas and potatoes grow best on it. The sloping green appearance of the fields, which are here and there interspersed with tufts of wood and the white houses, makes them look like so many country seats, and very beautiful. This island is divided among a number of petty seigneurs, most of them illiterate *habitants*. One of these bumpkins having presented himself, some years ago, to be elected as member for the county, could find nothing else to recommend himself to the electors but that he raised the greatest quantity of the best peas of all the inhabitants of the island.

At St Joachim, the parish above *Cap Tourmente*, the Priests of St Joachim, the Quebec Seminary, to whom this parish belongs, have a country seat to which they retire with all the students for a month during the vacation. This is a great place for wild geese, in the spring and fall, but the bucks of Quebec, whenever they stray this way in search of amusement, (up to the hips in mud,) prefer snipe shooting, which is quite fashionable. It would look vulgar to fire a random shot at a goose.

The 31st, having taken our leave of our new acquaintances on the Isle of Orleans, we took advantage of the return of the fine weather to continue our journey, and in the evening, (with a firm strong current the most of the day in our favour,) we got to Murray Bay, the far end of civilized settlements in this direction.

The Little  
River.

The Little River, the first parish we passed this day, is situated at the foot of high perpendicular rocks, and the farms between these and the St Lawrence are but small. The resources of the people, therefore, consist in sugar and eels, with which the mountains and river supplies them in great abundance, a compensation, as it were, for confining their fields within such narrow limits. We saw a number of orchards at this place. An *habitant* from whom we bought some milk said that some seasons he sold three hundred bushels of apples and cleared upward of sixty pounds by his orchard.

The people of Little River having, after the seasons for making sugar and fishing eels and collecting their small crop are over, nothing to do but to amuse themselves, pass away the rest of the time as merrily as they can. Scarce a man of them but plays the fiddle pretty well, nor a woman who does not dance and sing, as if just imported from Paris.

Bay St  
Paul.

The parish of *Bate St Paul* appeared screwed in a deep valley between high mountains. The land here is fertile and produces good pine, from which the inhabitants extract the tan.

Les Ebou-  
lements.

The *Eboulements* are so called from the ravages made in former days by an earthquake, of which deep scars are still remaining in the face of those venerable hills. Poverty dwells here in its most ragged and emaciated form. Hardly any thing but potatoes will grow on these barren mountains, on which a number of poor people are roosted to toil and starve for three fourths of the year.

Ile aux  
Coudres.

*Isles aux Coudres* lies off the Bay St Paul and *Eboulements*, about a league. It is three leagues in circumference, belongs to the Seminary of Quebec, and appears to make the inhabitants live very comfortably. These, like the people of Orleans, are

civil and good natured, which may be owing to their priest who keeps them under good discipline.

In 1762, there were no lands cleared and no houses built at <sup>Murray</sup> Murray Bay, but, at present, it swarms with Canadians. As the <sup>Bay.</sup> habitants of Point Lévis and Beauport, as well as others living in the immediate vicinity of Quebec, assume the surly tone and illbred look of the gentry of *Cul de Sac* and St Roch, so the people of Murray Bay seem to have formed their manners upon those of their next neighbours, the *polished* inhabitants of King's Posts.

The 1st August, we left Murray Bay early in the morning and, with the help of a strong current, we got in good time to Tadoussac. Before we arrived at this place, the tide very uncivilly left us to wait its return upon the centre of *Battures aux Alouettes*, a bank on the west side of river Saguenay, which dries every tide and extends three leagues into the river.

The Black River, which forms the western boundary of the King's Posts, is but a rivulet; a few salmon are caught at its mouth by the Micmacs from the south shore and the people of Murray Bay, who have many fierce engagements on these occasions.

Tadoussac, from its central situation, is considered the head- <sup>Tadoussac.</sup> quarters of the King's Posts. It is here the French are said to have first landed and to have built a small town after their arrival in Canada, but no other vestiges now remain of such a place but the foundations of a few houses. The present buildings, consisting of a dwelling house, outhouses and a chapel which has stood one hundred and ten years, stand upon the angle formed by the junction of the Saguenay with the St Lawrence. The Saguenay flowing on the west between two immense ramparts of rocks, a chain of high mountains in the shape



of a semi circle on the north and east, and the St Lawrence in front, give this place rather a romantic appearance.

The harbour is a beautiful sandy bay in the shape of a horse shoe, a mile in circumference. The bank on which the houses are built rises about twenty feet above the level of the water. It is divided into two equal parts by a brook of clear water and, though composed of sand, it is covered with green turf.

The people fishing, the whales playing in the basin before the house, the cattle grazing around the gardens, the birds flying about, with the universal verdure which prevails in the summer season, give the place a lively appearance. But how sadly the scene is reversed in the winter, when, not only the animated part of the creation retires from the horrid prospect, but the very rocks and trees seem to shrink and groan under the heaps of snow which cover them. The latter are actually torn up by the roots or broken in splinters by the westerly wind which rushes, from the Saguenay with a violence which threatens to sweep every thing before it.

There are six field pieces at Tadousac, by the respectable appearance of which, (as well as by the Indians showing themselves in red dresses,) the clerk of the post, Mr. Martin, saved the place, in 1775, from the depredations of the American privateers, who, in the same year, plundered and destroyed most of the rest of the ports, for want of like advantages and stratagems.

The etymology of the word "Tadousac", I have not been able to trace; some persons say it is a corruption of *Tête du Sac*, the bay before it bearing some resemblance to a bag; the Indians call it *Shate shi kush*, the entrance of the River (1).

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(1) Mgr Lafleche, Bishop of Three Rivers, who was for many years a missionary among the Indian tribes of the North-West, says that its proper name is Tadoussak, from Totoussak, the plural of Totoush, *mamelon*.

The 2nd, we continued our travel up the Saguenay, and on the 4th, we arrived at Chicoutimi, reckoned thirty leagues from our last stage, Tadousac. The Saguenay River.

The Saguenay is the largest and the finest river on the coast; it runs east one hundred and fifty leagues to Tadousac from Lake *Shaganaga*, or *Stony Lake*, which is but one and a half league in circumference, and marks the height of land between Hudson's Bay and the River St Lawrence. At its entrance, it is nearly a league in breadth, and though so deep that no bottom has ever been found, the passage is dangerous, owing to the current which is remarkably strong, running with irresistible force upon two reefs of rocks which project into the river on each side, and are visible only at low water, when, the current being slack and the danger visible, the pilot seizes this favorable moment either to pass into or out of the River.

The Saguenay is navigable for vessels of any burthen to Chicoutimi, to which place the tide rises, and whales and porpoises are seen. Its common breadth, from Tadousac to Chicoutimi, is from one and a half to three miles, and soundings, sixty fathoms. Beyond this last place, as far as Lake St John, the distance of twenty four leagues, the water collects within a narrow channel and passes with such force and velocity among rocks and over precipices as are impossible to stem. Passed Lake St John, which is twelve leagues across, the Saguenay, to its source, is a continuation of falls and rapids.

The most remarkable of these falls is called the *Chaudiere*, The Chaudiere Falls. about half way between *Assuapmousoin* and Lake St John. This large river, collecting into a narrow compass, precipitates itself at this place over a rock at least one hundred and fifty feet high with a foaming and noise surpassed only by those of Niagara. But, to avoid being suspected of availing myself of the license of a traveller, it may be necessary to remark that the height just

mentioned is not perpendicular, and that the rock is divided into three parts, rising above each other like the seats in a theatre and forming three falls, each of which may be between forty and fifty feet high.

From Tadousac, the bare rocks on each side the river maintain their elevated and rugged appearance for a distance of twenty-five leagues, when they gradually diminish and then become clothed with wood. Now and then, we are surprised by a wide gap on either side through which a river runs, abounding with salmon and trout. Five leagues below Chicoutimi, we passed a deep bay on our left which the French, the first time they passed this way, mistook for the channel of the River, and on discovering their mistake cried out "Ha Ha"! It has, therefore, ever since retained the name of *Baie des Ha! Ha!*

No scene can inspire one with gloomier and more terrific ideas than the one met when navigating this river on a dark, stormy night, the thunder rolling among those precipices with a rattling noise. The flashes of lightning discover to you, at intervals, the dismal objects around you and the danger you are in, and the reflexion that you are at the mercy of the jarring elements, which in a few minutes may dash you against the rocks into eternity, adds much to the horror of your situation.

Chicoutimi.

*E-She-qua-ti-mi*, in the Indian language, signifies "the water is still deep", (1) hence "Chicoutimi". The post so called is situated on the point formed by the Saguenay, on the north and north-east and the Chicoutimi River, which is small and rapid, on the south-west. At this place there is a good dwelling house, a chapel and a store which was built in 1707, as written above.

(1) *lahko*, up to there; *timec*, it is deep.—Mgr Lafféche.

the door (1). The goods for the interior posts are brought this length in the summer in a schooner or boats, and afterwards conveyed by the Indians in small canoes up the country by way of Chicoutimy River, which brings them to Lake St John.

The 4th August, having procured two small canoes, with a Canadian and an Indian to each, I left my large canoe and crew at Chicoutimy and set out, myself in one canoe, and the baggage in the other, for Lake St John, where I arrived the third day after making ten portages and seeing nothing remarkable.

The Chicoutimy river, only seven leagues in length, brought us into *Kinogomic*, or Long Lake, seven leagues long; making a short portage, we fell into *Kinogomic-shish*, a lake three leagues more in length, then into *Rivière des Aunais*, a small serpentine river, three leagues long, after which we got into *La Belle Rivière*, a small river which brought us into Lake St. John, and is four leagues long.

Lake St John is circular and, though thirty leagues in circumference, can be seen with one glance of the eye. The north shore is low and swampy, and the south, more elevated and covered with wood. The country from *Baie des Ha Ha* till we pass Lake St John, the distance of ten leagues, is fit for cultivation, the soil being good, the face of the country pretty even, and the climate the same as at Quebec, from which, across the country, it is distant three days' journey, either in a small canoe or on snow shoes.

The sort of woods which grow on this fertile tract of land are: maple, red and white pine, white and black birch, ash, cedar and elm.

(1) There was, in 1750, a saw mill on the River *Oupanétique*, one and a half leagues above Chicoutimi, which worked two saws, night and day.—“*Mémoire sur les postes du domaine du Roy*” addressed to Bigot by Father Claude Godefroy Coquart, 5th April, 1750.

The ruins  
of a Jesuit  
establish-  
ment

The post of Lake St John is built on the south of the lake, four leagues from its entrance, at the mouth of a beautiful river where the Jesuits, under the French Government, had a settlement for the purpose of instructing the Indians, until expelled for receiving too costly presents of furs for their spiritual services.

Some marks of their industry and improvements are still to be seen at this place. The plum and apple trees of their garden, grown wild through want of care, yet bear fruit in abundance. The foundation of their church and other buildings, as well as the church yard, are still visible. The bell of their church, two iron spades, a horseshoe, a scythe and a bar of iron, two feet in length, have lately been dug out of the ruins of this apparently once flourishing spot, and, adjoining, is an extensive plain or meadow on which much timothy hay grows (1). An island in the lake, near this place, swarms with snakes which, the Canadians believe, were conjured by the Jesuits, from their own residence.

Lake St John is shallow, with a sandy bottom; small white fish, *doré*, pike, and a sort of fish resembling salmon, one and a half foot long, called by the Indians *Winanis*, are found in it, though not in great numbers.

The Assu-  
apmousoin  
post.

Having set out from Lake St John on the 8th, we arrived at Assuapmousoin on the 14th, a distance of sixty leagues of the most unchristian like country. On both sides of the river the bank was high and scraggy, and not even a wild berry to be met with, all the way. A few dwarf spruce trees scattered here and there were the only productions of this most barren part of the world we could see, and our ears were charmed by no

(1) "The Jesuit Fathers had mills at Lake St John; some of the materials used in their construction have been found lately".—Mr. James McKenzie's evidence, given before a committee of the House of Assembly in 1824.

other music than the hissing of snakes, which, whenever we went on shore, sallied forth from the crevices of the rocks to wag their long tails before us, or trust them round our feet. We made eighteen portages, the paddle was seldom used, and the setting pole took its place the most of the road.

The word *Assuap* means "to watch" and *Mousua*, "moose deer", which in former years were very numerous at this place, but are now as scarce as they are on the Plains of Abraham. *Assuapmousoin* is indeed the poorest and shabbiest of Her Majesty's posts. A hut, a small store and a small potatoe garden were all the improvements that could be seen at this lonely, miserable place (1). The Indians of this posts consist of a dozen lazy families, who are not Christians. They live, in winter, chiefly on hares, and, in summer, on fish. This place communicates with the River St Maurice by small lakes and rivers, and is said to lie due north from Maskinongé.

As I had seen enough of the country to satisfy my curiosity in this direction, and had the coast still to visit, and as, moreover, the cold weather had set in, I returned from *Assuapmousoin* on the 15th and arrived at Tadousac on the 30th of August. The Indians managed their small canoes, coming down the rapid and cascades of the Saguenay, with astonishing dexterity, and they are equally expert in using the setting pole, going up. A Canadian requires a long time to learn to manage those ticklish vehicles with any degree of safety on such dangerous navigation.

The post of *Mistassini*, a word which means "a large stone," is reckoned at a distance of ninety leagues from *Assuapmousoin*. The canoe route is by the Saguenay, to her source, the course

Mistassini;  
Hudson  
Bay and  
North-  
West Cos'  
posts.

(1) The post of *Assuapmousoin* was on a small lake of the same name.

N. W. a distance of thirty leagues, then down the stream, sixty leagues north-east, till you fall into the great Lake Mistassini. The number of carrying places is thirty two, the longest of which is three miles. The longest portage from Chicoutimy to *Assuapmouision* is about the same length, and we meet with it immediately on leaving the first named place. The road in all the portages we passed was as good (being commonly over rock,) as in the River Unópic, but the carrying places to Mistassini, we were informed, were dreadfully rough. The country to the height of land is low, swampy and mossy, with small spruce trees thinly scattered, after which it becomes again mountainous and woody for most of the way to Hudson's Bay.

Lake Mistassini is so extensive that the natives do not know the dimensions of it; they, however, say there are bays in it as large as Lake St John. It abounds with such fish as are found in other lakes throughout the country, and from the country bordering upon it we get the finest of our furs, to which the severity of the winter (lasting eight months,) is extremely favorably.

Our post (1) is situated at this end of Lake Mistassini, and that of the Hudson Bay, which is fitted out from East Main Factory, and called "Birch Point," is built four days journey farther off, on the edge of a small lake out of which the water communication to the Factory takes its source. After leaving our establishment

(1) In his evidence before the select committee appointed by the House of Assembly, during the session of 1823-1824, to consider the subject of the settlement of the Crown Lands, Mr. James McKenzie says that this post was built at the south-west end of the lake, "on a long, elevated point projecting into the lake and joining the mainland by a narrow neck." The situation was beautiful, the soil not bad, but the climate cold, with ice on the lake, sometimes till July.

He also adds that there were no fixed trading stations on Lake Mistassini until the North-West Company leased the King's Post. "The former lessees sent goods there to trade, every spring, by a large river, as large as the Assuapmouision, which falls into Lake St John, from the north."

to get to Birch Point, we continue for twenty-five leagues along the lake till we come to the large stone from which it takes its name, and then we strike off south west, till we arrive through lakes and rivers at the English Post (1).

Lake Mistassini, keeping an easterly direction, discharges far to the eastward into James Bay by Rupert's River, which is said to be as large as the Saguenay (2).

The Indians who trade at Birch Point come from the Bay, and are in every respect the same as those trading at our post, where they, occasionally, take a sly trip to dispose of their odds and ends, or the scraping of their *Maskimutes* (3), to which frequently very fine martens inadvertently stick. The Hudson's Bay people come to Birch Point in boats.

The distance between East Main Factory and Tadousac, by the canoe route, is, from the best of my information, three hundred leagues, and a half of this distance may be fixed at the source of the Saguenay, where the waters take opposite directions, so that my placing it, in the beginning of this account of the country, at the post of Mistassini was erroneous. A light canoe, well manned and well piloted, may perform the journey from East Main to Tadousac in twenty days.

(1) *Fort aux Anglais.*

(2) Mr. François Verreault, who was also examined by the select committee of 1823-1824, says, speaking of Lake Mistassini: "The lake has three outlets,—there are, to the right, two outlets, twenty leagues distant from each other, that on the left hand is four leagues distant from that of the middle—that on the left hand falls in Hudson's Bay. The two others unite again at the distance of forty leagues, or thereabouts and flow into Hudson's Bay. The place where they reunite themselves is called *Nevishqueska* (*Ne* comes from "point," *wishque* from "birch bark" and *ska*, "much," and it may be rendered into English, "Birch Point. This point is also known by the name of *Fort aux Anglais*. . . . . The fort was built of red spruce and grey pine, of which there is some hereabouts."

(3) Bags.



## II.

Portneuf. We shall now take leave of the Saguenay and steer, north-east, along the St Lawrence and sea coast. On the 21st of August, having taken my large canoe and crew, *en passant* at Chicoutimi, I left Tadonsac early in the morning and arrived the same day, in the evening, at Portneuf, which is fifteen leagues from Tadousac, and due north from the island of Beek. This place (six leagues in length from *Sault au Mouton* to *Sault au Cochon*, two pretty falls which at some distance appear like linen bleaching), though in the centre of the King's Domains, belongs to private individuals. It was given by the French to some petty noblesse. The soil is sandy and the beach level and skirted with small woods.

The post is built upon a high sand bank, with a fine river meandering before it and which soon loses itself in the St Lawrence. The deceased Mr. Peter Stuart resided there with his family while manager of the posts, to which circumstance Portneuf still owes several elegant buildings, besides a chapel in which His Holiness the Pope might not be ashamed to officiate.

*Mille Vaches.*

The Point and Bay of *Mille Vaches* (so called from the large stones in the bay, resembling, at low water, a herd of cattle), lie two leagues west of this post.

The seal bank.

This bay and point have of late years been as destructive to ships as they formerly proved to the seals which, in November of 1775, were left by the tide in such numbers on these shoals that the servants of the Lessees slaughtered, in the course of a few hours, between two and three thousand of them, the oil ex-

tracted from which produced as many pounds. It was then quite common to knock on the head from five to twelve hundred of those animals every year in the month of November and December, which is probably the copulating time, and this was called *la boucherie*. But the bank on which so much murder was committed at that time has been now many years worn away by the waves. The Bay of *Mille Vaches* yields hay enough for a thousand cows. *La Boucherie.*

The 22nd, we did not go farther than Post of *Ile Jérémie*, which takes its name from the man who first settled here. It is eight leagues from Portneuf. The buildings, among which is a chapel, are built upon an eminence amongst woods and rocks. This is the best of the Kings Posts for furs. *Post of Ile Jérémie.*

A Canadian of the name of Vallé stays here with his family; he keeps the place in high order, and is a very civil person. His wife appears to have nothing prepossessing in her person and manners, but she makes up for any deficiency in these respects by keeping her husband's accounts.

The 23rd, early, we left, and on the 24th, we got to river Godbout, the distance, twenty two leagues. The banks of *Maniquagan*, which we passed on the way, and which are the terror of the mariners, extend three leagues into the River St Lawrence, and are ten leagues long. Three considerable rivers, the Betiamis, Bustard and Maniquagan, discharge themselves on those banks. Their gaping mouths, at first sight, make a grand show, but they are choked at the entrance with sand. *Maniquagan* means "to set snares with the hand." *Manicouagan.*

The buildings at Godbout, like all those of King's Posts, are placed in a cluster, without order or method, as if they had

dropped from the clouds, on a low sandy point on the east side of the Godbout river; the high chain of rocky mountains which guards the coast keeping, with a surly look, a respectable distance behind this motley group.

This river, in which between fifty and sixty tierces of salmon are annually caught in nets, is but a few yards wide, and so choked with sand that only small craft can enter it even at high water. Wild fowls, codfish and lobsters are got in great plenty at this place in the warm season, and the post may be reckoned among the best for furs and seal oil.

The Seven  
Islands.

The 24th, at our usual early hour, we were in the canoe. On the 26th, A.M., we came to the Seven Islands and the same day we reached the "*Pointe aux-Cormorants*, nine leagues further on. The Seven Islands are reckoned six and twenty leagues north east of Godbout. In this distance we saw nothing remarkable excepting blueberries and raspberries, which appeared plentiful wherever we debarked.

The Bay of the Seven Islands is seven leagues in circumference. The point on which the houses (placed in the same beautiful confusion as at Godbout,) are built is low, sandy and covered with the usual uniform of His Majesty's Posts, brushwood and stunted spruce. The Seven Islands, stretching in the form of a crescent about a league along this point, defend it like a line of battle ships from the ravages of the waves, and form one of the best harbours on the coast.

We saw no fewer than fourteen widows with their orphans at this post. The same number were at (*Ile Jérémie*,) and each of the other posts maintained about *half as many* who never failed, whenever they came before us, to beg new dresses, for they are entirely supported at the expense of the lessees,.....  
.....The sunday trappings

of those poor though wanton wenches, hung to out dry on the branches, put us in mind of a rag fair. (1)

Lobsters are found in great plenty in the bay. It is astonishing that no oysters were ever found on the north shore of the St. Lawrence. The River Moisy, the next to the Saguenay in beauty and size, falls six leagues below the Seven Islands into the St. Lawrence, which here opens its jaws pretty wide, being thirty leagues across.

The 26th, passing the north-east extremity of the King's Domains at the Cormorants, we entered early in the morning on the seignory of Mingan, and after sailing thirty one leagues along high, steep, rugged rocks on the one hand and nothing but the open sea the most of the way on the other, we arrived at the Head Post of the seignory the next day.

The situation of this post appeared to us the most delightful <sup>Mingan</sup> we had seen in the course of our travels through this barbarous coast. The beach, composed of hard sand and covered with turf, is, for six leagues level enough for a coach and six to drive on. The Mingan river runs gently about an acre behind the buldings till it falls into the Gulf, a mile below them. The view in front of the post, it must be owned, is a good deal obstructed by a cluster of islands, but this is in some degree recompensed by the shelter they afford, the grass which grows on them, and the numerous flocks of wild fowls that hatch around their edges. The harbour is fit for "seventy fours" to ride in, and the build-ings, among which is a chapel, are as good as any on the coast.

(1) What a difference between the miserable "Montagners" of the North Shore, in 1810, as described throughout by M. McKenzie, and the happy *Papinachois—les gens qui rient*, "they who laugh"—crowding around their missionaries, under the paternal and more sympathetic French Regime!

See: *Missions du Saguenay; relation inédite du R. P. Lauré, S. J., 1720 à 1730* edited by Rev: Father Jones, S. J., at Montreal, 1889.

For some distance on the west of the post, the sand being left to the skirt of the wood in high ridges proves that the spot where Mingan now stands was formerly overflowed by the sea which, by raising those mound in the course of time, forced itself within its present compass; it is not improbable that the island, at some future period, may, in like manner, become a part of the main land, the intermediate spaces being now very shallow.

The old  
French  
post.

The wood about Mingan is the same as has been described at the Seven Islands. Salmon and trout are taken in the river, and seals shot in the harbour before the house. Mingan island is a mile in circumference, low and covered with grass, and lies three leagues above the post and one from the shore. The post stood here in the time of the French, who had it fortified; a chimney and a well are, however, the only marks now remaining to prove the existence of such a place.

Iles aux  
Perroquets.

Near Mingan Island is a small rocky island called *Ile des Perroquets* from the vast number of these birds hatching on it, and it is remarkable as the sides of it appear from a distance like the walls of a garrison with the different kinds of birds arranged around the edge in the utmost order, like so many troops to defend it.

The "Great River St John" which divides the Quebec from the Newfoundland district, and where the coast of Labrador commences, falls into the Gulf three leagues west of the last mentioned island. Though honored with the epithet of "Great" in maps and books, we saw nothing to justify that appellation; the entrance is narrow and full of sand. It produces between thirty and forty tierces of salmon every year.

Post *Nepi-*  
*oshibou.*

On the 29th, we continued our journey from Mingan for thirty leagues to *Nepioshibou*, on the "Man River," where we arrived

the 30th, our course being north-east always, along a rugged shore and among islands. There is no harbour but for small craft, and that, in the river, which is difficult of entrance at this post. The situation is pretty, the banks of the river, though sandy, are green, but the river is not considerable. From eighty to one hundred tierces of salmon are annually caught here. The sand on the west of the buildings has been left by the sea in deep furrows as at Mingan. The buildings consist only of a dwelling house, a store and a shade. With respect to furs, this may be ranked among the inferior posts.

The 31st, we now hastened towards the end of our journey *Masquaro*, and the last of the posts on the seigniory of Mingan, *Masquaro* where we arrived on the 1st of September, the distance twenty leagues from the last post, fifteen of which were across a deep bay and along a sandy beach much exposed to the open sea, the remaining five leagues we passed upon islands.

*Masquaro* post is built on the river of that name, in a bay, among rocks and islands, and so well concealed that, in 1775, the American pirates did not discover it. This place has a new chapel, with a small house and store which, all together, make but a shabby appearance, but quantities of beavers and martens are found throughout the country bordering the post.

The Indians are much in the habit of trading with the Labrador fishermen, and of going with their furs to Great Esquimaux Bay, to which the distance across the country is but short, and where a number of peddlars from Quebec trade and fish.

There were two cows at *Masquaro*, which have lately died for want of grass, and two superannuated cats were the only domestic animals to be seen. We saw no cattle higher up the Saguenay than Chicoutimi, nor lower down the St Lawrence than Mingan. There is something very unaccountable either in

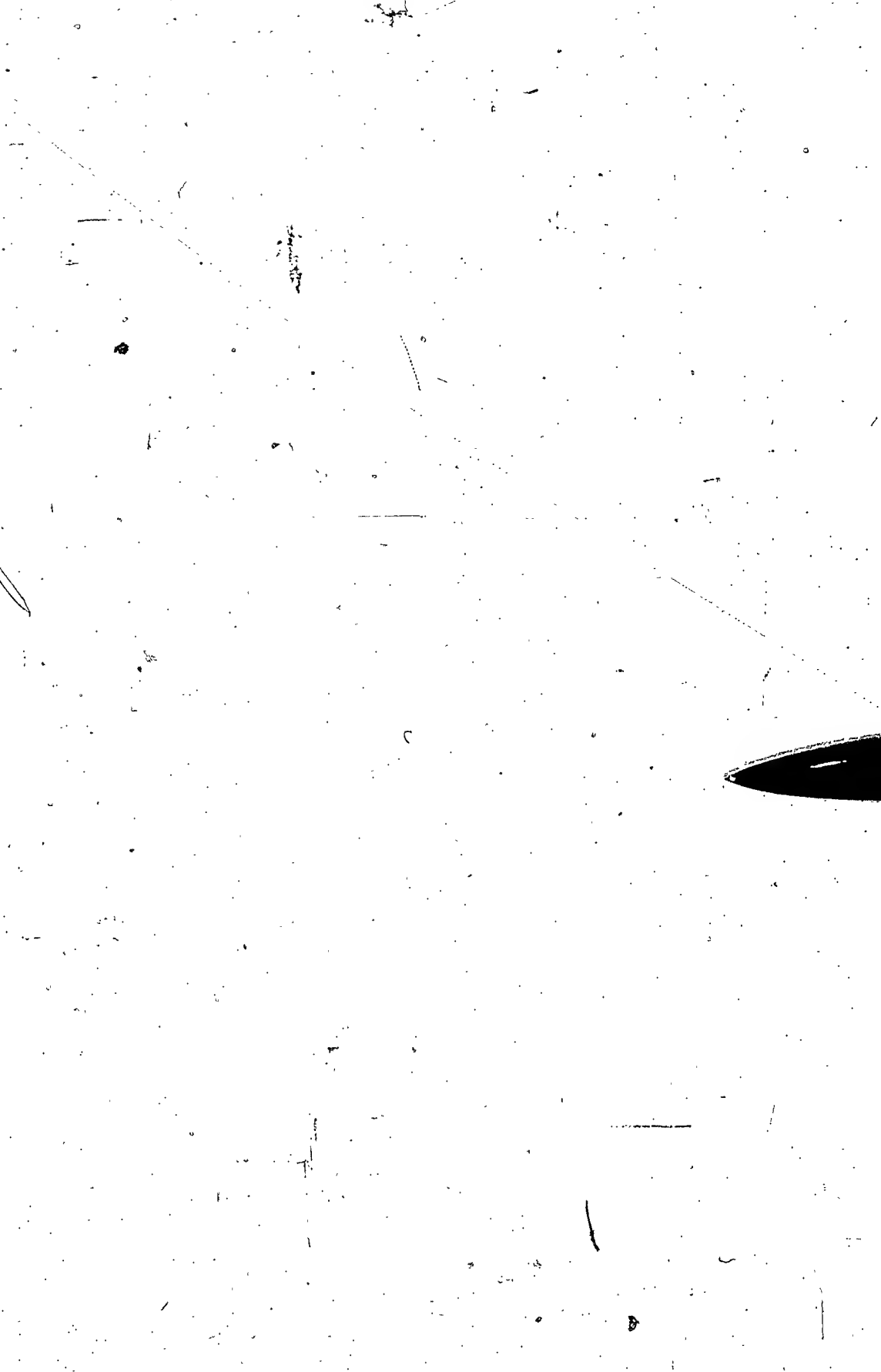
The  
cattle  
become  
unruly.

the herbs or air of this coast which makes the cattle as wild and unruly as its other inhabitants. The Jesuits thought it was owing to the grass. A he goat, not long since, wounded with its horns the clerk of Chicoutimi in the thigh, and the bull another time almost finished him.

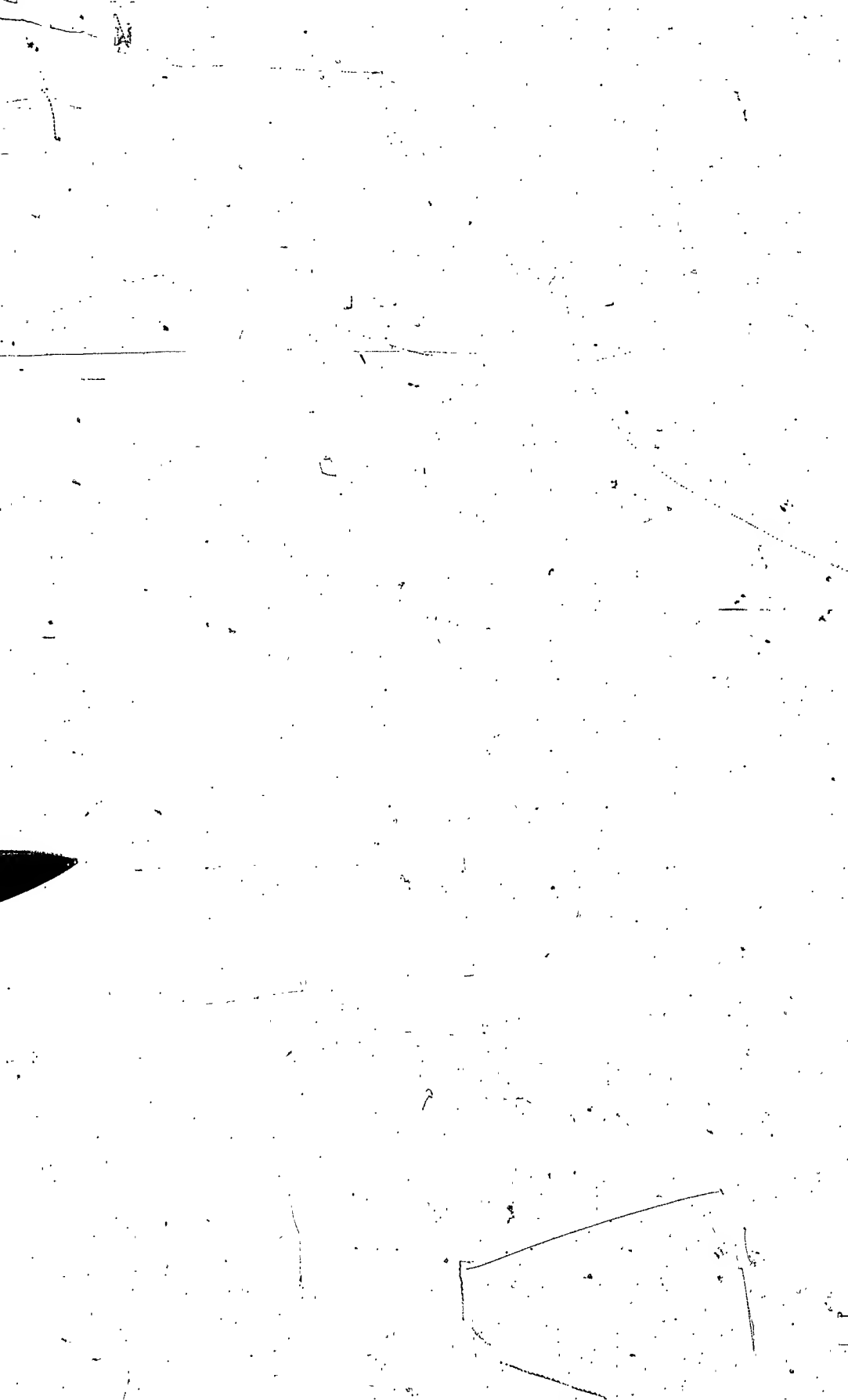
Natas-  
quam sal-  
mon fish-  
eries.

The largest river on the south of Mingan is the *Natasquan*, near half way between *Napioshibou* and *Masquaro*, it is about two and a half miles wide at the entrance but very shallow. Two hundred and fifty tierces of salmon are taken in nets out of this river every year by five men. The sand on the east side of the mouth of this river is collected into high hillocks in the shape of a sugar loaf; to use a comparison more familiar at *Natasquan*, we may say they resemble a woman's cap. Exclusive of the river already mentioned, there are seven more on this seigniory, into which salmon enters and which are pretty large, but it would be too tedious to describe them here.

The 2nd September we left *Masquaro* on our return to Québec, where we arrived on the 15th, the distance two hundred leagues.







THE  
NORTH-WEST COMPANY'S  
"AGREEMENTS"

OF

1802 AND 1804



THE  
"NORTH-WEST AGREEMENT" (1)

1802

WHEREAS by certain articles of agreement made and entered into at Montreal, in the Province of Lower-Canada, on the thirtieth day of October, one thousand seven hundred and ninety five, by and between Simon McTavish, Joseph Frobisher, John Gregory and William McGillivray, these composing the Firm of McTavish, Frobisher & Co, of Montreal aforesaid, merchants and co-partners, and Angus Shaw, Roderic McKenzie, Cuthbert Grant, Alexander McLeod, and William Thorburn, these represented by Alexander McKenzie their Agent and Attorney, a Joint Concern or trade to that part of the Indian Country commonly called the North-West was agreed to be carried on, the said parties and others to be admitted Partners therein under the said Articles of Agreement on their joint account and risk for a certain term or number of years, that is to say to commence with the first Outfit of the year one thousand seven

(1) This is from a copy found in Mr. R. McKenzie's papers.

The North-West Company had no other Constitution but these "agreements" of 1802 and 1804. They proved sufficiently strong to carry them through their struggles with the Hudson Bay Company, "The Chartered Company," as they called it, and prevent further serious opposition among the Canadian traders.

hundred and ninety nine, and to terminate with the returns of the Outfit of the year one thousand eight hundred and five, the said Concern to consist of forty six shares and to be regulated and carried on under the different terms, stipulations and conditions in the said Articles of Agreement mentioned and contained ;

AND WHEREAS, under and in virtue of the said Agreement, the following Persons now carrying on trade to the said Indian Country as Partners, under the name or Firm of the NORTH-WEST COMPANY, that is to say the said Simon McTavish, John Gregory, William McGillivray and Duncan McGillivray, William Hallowell and Roderic McKenzie, now composing the said House or Firm of McTavish, Frobisher & Co ; Angus Shaw, the said Roderic McKenzie, Alexander McLeod, Wm. Thorburn, Daniel McKenzie, Wm. McKay, John McDonald, Donald McTavish, John McDonell, Archibald Normand McLeod, Alexander McDougall, Charles Chaboillez, John Sayer, Peter Grant, Alex. Fraser, Eneas Cameron, John Finlay, Duncan Cameron, James Hughes, Alex. McKay, Hugh McGillis, Alex. Henry, J. Bte. Cadotte, John McGillivray, James McKenzie and Simon Fraser conceiving it essentially necessary to alter and change the aforesaid articles of agreement and to form a more regular solid permanent system for the Government and Regulations of the various rights and interests of the Parties concerned in the said trade and commerce, in order thereby and by a mutual confidence and good understanding to unite and consolidate their interests in such manner as to render all attempts which now are or hereafter may be made by other Persons to injure them in their said trade and commerce fruitless and ineffectual, and above all to preserve and secure to the said Parties concerned, their heirs and assigns the many benefits and advantages which, by their united labours and exertions in the said Indian Country, they have become entitled to reap and receive in the further conti-

nance of the said trade and commerce and particularly from the enlarged plan of carrying on the same and the increased number of outfits and other expenses which have become necessary for that purpose and which must eventually be productive of greater advantages and emoluments to the parties concerned;

THESE PRESENTS THEREFORE WITNESS that the said <sup>The Com-</sup> Simon McTavish, John Gregory, Wm McGillivray, Duncan Mc <sup>pany con-</sup> Gillivray, Wm Hallowell and Rod McKenzie, now composing the <sup>stituted.</sup> said House or Firm of McTavish, Frobisher and Company, of Montreal, aforesaid merchants; Angus Shaw, Daniel McKenzie, Wm McKay, John McDonald, Donald McTavish, John McDonell, Arch. N. McLeod, Alex. McDougall, Chs Chaboillez, John Sayer, Peter Grant, Alex. Fraser, Eneas Cameron, John Finlay, Duncan Cameron, Js. Hughes, Alex. McKay, Hugh McGillis, Alex. Henry, John McGillivray, James McKenzie, and Simon Fraser, do hereby consent and agree that from and after the first day of December of the year one thousand eight hundred and two, the aforesaid articles of agreement of the thirtieth day of October one thousand seven hundred and ninety five, be and the same and every part thereof is hereby declared to be rescinded and annulled in so far as the rights and interests of the said Parties to these presents are or may be thereby affected or bound and the said Parties to these presents do hereby mutually consent and promise and agree to carry to the interior part of the said Indian <sup>Its object.</sup> Country commonly called the "North-West", and to all and every other part and place where they shall see fit a trade and commercẽ in furs and peltries and other commodities on their joint account and risk as copartners, under the Name and Firm of the North-West Company to be governed and carried on under the following Rules and Regulations.

## ARTICLE 1

To last  
twenty  
years.

That the present copartnership or concern shall commence with the outfit of the year one thousand eight hundred and three and shall continue remain and be carried on for the space and term of twenty years hereafter, ending with the returns of the outfit of the year one thousand eight hundred and twenty-two by and between the said Partners to these presents and the survivors of them and others to be admitted Partners under the present agreement.

## ARTICLE 2

Number  
and distri-  
bution of  
the shares.

That the present concern shall consist of ninety two shares to be divided held and enjoyed by and amongst the said Parties to these presents, and others to be hereafter admitted as Partners therein in manner following that is to say the said Simon McTavish, John Gregory, Wm. McGillivray, Dun. McGillivray, Wm. Hallowell and Rod. McKenzie, now composing the said House or Firm of McTavish Frobisher and Company or whatever persons the said House may be composed of during the present concern shall have hold and retain thirty shares, John McDonald two shares, Donald McTavish two shares, John McDonnell two shares, Arch. N. McLeod two shares, Chs. Chaboillez two shares, John Sayer two shares, Peter Grant two shares, Alexander Fraser two shares, Eneas Cameron two shares, John Finlay two shares, Dun. Cameron two shares, Jas. Hughes two shares, Alex. McKay two shares, Hugh McGillis two shares, Alex. Henry two shares, Alex. McDougall two shares, John McGillivray two shares, Jas. McKenzie two shares, and Simon

Fraser two shares, making in all seventy six shares (1) and that the remaining sixteen shares not appropriated shall be disposed of to such person or persons as may hereafter be admitted into the present concern as a Partner or Partners therein or otherwise as the said Parties to these presents or their assigns being Partners in the said concern shall judge fit, and that until the said shares not appropriated or others hereafter to become vacant shall be disposed of the profits and advantages arising therefrom shall be equally divided among the existing Partners for the time being in proportion to the number of shares they hold in the concern who shall be liable to the risk and losses that may be sustained or thereby.

.....(2)

ARTICLE 3

It is stipulated and agreed by and between the said Parties to these presents that the Persons who now or at any time hereafter during the period of the present concern shall or may compose the said House of McTavish Frobisher and Company, at Montreal aforesaid shall and they are hereby exclusively authorized and empowered during the said period to direct conduct and manage the affairs of the said North-West Company at Montreal for and on account of the whole, to import all the necessary goods merchandizes and commodities fit and necessary for carrying on the aforesaid trade and commerce to hire and employ all Clerks, Interpreters and engagés from time to time as shall be necessary and requisite for carrying on the said

The agents; their powers and duties.

(1) These only make sixty eight shares. Through some clerical error in this copy the names of Messrs Wm. McKay, Roderic McKenzie, Daniel McKenzie, Angus Shaw are omitted. They, probably, also possessed two shares each.

(2) Special conditions relating to a few individual members.



Their remuneration.

business to make all advances for Liquors Provisions and other necessary articles of the same kind which shall be charged at the current market price at Montreal, for which said advances and trouble the said McTavish Frobisher and C<sup>o</sup> shall be allowed by the said Concern a Charge of four per cent on the amount of the whole outfit at the close of each year and interest on the goods imported at the rate of five per cent per annum from the time they fall due in England to the thirtieth day of November of the year the outfit is made in, from and after which period the said McTavish Frobisher and Company shall be allowed interest at the rate of six per cent upon the said goods so imported until the same shall be paid and satisfied. That the said House of McTavish Frobisher and Company shall also be allowed interest at the rate of six per cent on all cash advances which may be by them considered necessary or expedient to be made for the use and benefit of the Concern it being understood that the said McTavish Frobisher and Company shall and will on their parts credit and allow for all in their hands belonging to any of the Partners under the present agreement interest at the rate of six per cent per annum. And in as much as the said House of McTavish Frobisher and C<sup>o</sup> must necessarily keep up the present number of Partners therein for the performance of the several duties they are hereby become bound to fulfill for and on behalf of the said North-West Company and in order also to avoid all doubts and difficulties which might arise in case of a change of all or any of the Partners of the said House during the present Concern, It is therefore stipulated and agreed that every new Partner coming into the said House of McTavish Frobisher and Co and being thereby admitted to any right, share or interest in the Present Concern shall be specially held and bound in and by this agreement admitting him a Partner in the House, to the observance of all every the different clauses and stipulations mentioned and contained in the present agreement

in the same manner as the present Partners in the said House are hereby held and bound, in which case every new partner so coming into the said House during the period of the Present Concern shall be by the said Concern held and considered as entitled to all the benefits and advantages and bound to all duties and obligations contained in this agreement as if he had been present and signed and executed the same as one of the Partners now composing the said House.

## ARTICLE 4

That the Furs Peltries or other produce or returns of the aforesaid trade and commerce shall be shipped to England or wherelse it may be thought fit by the said house of McTavish Frobisher and Co, on the account and for the mutual benefit and advantage of the whole Concern for which trouble the said House shall be allowed a commission one half per cent on the whole amount of all that is sent to England and two and a half per cent on whatever part of such returns as may be sold and disposed of in the United States of America or sent that way to a market in any other country.—And that the neat proceeds of the said furs peltries or other produce and returns of the said trade shall be credited to each Individual of the Concern according to his share and proportion therein as soon as the same shall be placed to the credit of the said House of McTavish Frobisher and Co.

## ARTICLE 5

That two at least of the Partners of the said House of McTavish Frobisher and Co for the time being shall annually go to the Grand Portage for the purpose of conducting managing and They render yearly accounts.

carrying on the business of the concern on the communication to and at the Grand Portage as heretofore practised by the agents of the North-West Company. That the said partners shall assume and be stiled Agents of the North West Company and shall be aided and assisted in all occasions by the Wintering Partners whose duty it shall also be to attend in a particular manner to the Business of their respective Departments.

#### ARTICLE 6

That the account of each year's outfit shall be regularly closed after the outfit is made by the said House of McTavish Frobisher and Co. and one set of accounts current shall be by them annually forwarded to the Grand Portage one set to Temiscamingue and to any other of the Departments when the Parties concerned cannot conveniently attend at the Grand Portage to be by the said Parties signed and interchanged and any of the said Parties having any objection to the said accounts shall be bound to deliver in the same in writing within ten days after such account shall have been presented to him otherwise the said accounts shall be taken and considered as approved of by every such Party as fully and sufficiently as if he had signed the same.

#### ARTICLE 7

The annual meeting at Grand Portage.

That a meeting or meetings if necessary of the Partners as conveniently can attend shall be annually held in the month of June or July at the Grand Portage at which meeting the Partners who cannot attend may be represented by their attornies who shall be entitled to vote for them in order to deliberate and determine upon all such matters and things as to them shall seem fit and proper to be done and executed and performed in

and about the trade and commerce aforesaid and the interests thereof, and the majority of the Partners present or represented at the said meeting are hereby authorized and empowered to settle and determine all differences and difficulties among the Partners and all matters respecting the said trade and commerce or which by reason of the views, speculations and interests of the said concern becoming more extended may at any time hereafter be found necessary to be regulated, also to make such other and further Rules and Regulations (not being contrary to any Article of this Agreement) for the better managing and carrying on the said trade and commerce in future as they shall see fit. That every share in the said Concern shall be entitled to a vote of which fifty two shall be required and considered as a legal majority at the said meeting for deciding and determining upon all matters submitted to their consideration, and in all cases where the above number of fifty-two votes cannot be obtained by reason of the absence of Partners of shares unappropriated or otherwise, the legal majority shall in that case consist of the number of votes given and received that shall bear a proportion to all the appropriated shares at the time as fifty-two is to ninety-two. And it is hereby expressly covenanted stipulated and agreed <sup>its powers.</sup> that all and every the Rules, Regulations and decisions made and determined and resolved on by such majority in all the aforesaid cases shall be as effectual and binding upon all the Parties concerned, as well as those absent as those present at such meetings, as if herein specially expressed and provided for, and the said Parties and every one of them do hereby consent promise and agree to submit thereto, and to execute and perform all things therein and thereby determined without opposition or delay.

## ARTICLE 8

That the arrangements of all the Forts and Posts to be occupied by the said Concern with their establishment the wintering residence of the Partners of the Clerks and others and all matters incident thereto, shall be fixed, determined and appointed and generally directed and conducted by the majority of the Concern present at such arrangements.

## ARTICLE 9

Leaves of absence.

That the number of Wintering Partners to be allowed to go down to Montreal each year shall be regulated at the annual meeting of the Partners at the Grand Portage according to circumstances and agreeable to a list establishing the order of rotation which shall be made out at the commencement of this Concern by a majority of the Parties hereto or as they shall otherwise agree amongst themselves, provided that such number so to go to Montreal do not exceed five in any case whatever.—And it is hereby expressly stipulated and agreed that in case the Partner or Partners so going to Montreal shall neglect or refuse to return the ensuing Spring to fulfill the duties allotted to him or them by the Partners conducting the Business at Montreal without offering some good and sufficient reason or excuse of the validity of which the said annual meeting shall judge the said annual meeting may and they are hereby authorized to determine whether such Partner or Partners ought to be deprived of all his or their right and interest in the said Concern or of any and what part thereof and for what length of time, or in such other manner to determine respecting the same as to the said annual meeting shall appear just and

reasonable according to the circumstances of the case—and in every case when the said annual meeting shall think fit to order and determine that any such Partner or Partners by reason of his or their conduct in the premises ought to be deprived of all his or their share in the Concern the same shall be held and considered as forfeited and lost to every such Partner or Partners and shall cease and determine from the close of the outfit sent into the Country at the time such Partner or Partners was or were so permitted to go down to Montreal if not otherwise determined by the said annual meeting—and the share or shares of every such Partner or Partners shall at from and after the period they shall have been declared to have become forfeited by the said meeting revert to and be vested in the said Concern who are hereby empowered and authorized to appropriate and dispose of all and every such share or shares rights and interests to such other Person or Persons as they shall think fit.

## ARTICLE 10

And to the end that a frugal distribution of the property and effects of the said Concern may be observed, it is hereby expressly understood and agreed that all and every of the said Parties to these presents or the Persons under them or any of them who shall winter in the Indian Country shall deliver or send to the Grand Portage every year and oftener if convenient and requisite a true faithful and exact account and Inventory of all the goods, provisions and other effects they or either of them may have remaining on hand as well as of the Peltries, debts due by the Indians and canoemen they or either of them may have left in the country with just and true accounts of the expedition of goods committed to their respective charge and direction, it

Annual reports or journals.

being the intention that neither of the Parties who winter in the Indian Country or who come from Montréal to the Grand Portage on the business of the concern shall be allowed while there out of the common stock more than their personal necessities but that whatever shall be expended by them or either of them exceeding this limitation shall be placed to the account of him or them making such expenditures.

## ARTICLE 11

Expulsion  
for miscon-  
duct, &c.

AND WHEREAS from the remote situation of many of the said Parties in the Indian Country their distance from each other and the possibility of any or either of them conducting himself or themselves in such a manner as render himself or themselves unworthy by their improper conduct of continuing a Partner in the said concern, it is therefore expressly agreed on and is the will and intention of the said Parties to these Presents that when such misconduct or neglect shall be prov'd to the satisfaction of the majority of the annual meeting of the concern herein before established every such Party or Parties so misconducting or misbehaving himself or themselves shall and may upon the determination of the said annual meeting in every such case be expelled from the said Concern and his or their share and interest therein shall thereupon cease and determine and shall revert to and be vested in the said Concern who are hereby authorized to appropriate and dispose of every such share as their own property in such manner as they shall see fit reserving however to the said annual meeting the right and power to determine otherwise as to the share and interest aforesaid of every such Party so misconducting or misbehaving himself as circumstances may require.

## ARTICLE 12

The present agreement being intended for the purpose of carrying a trade and commerce in and to all and every part and parts of the Interior Country or where else it may be thought fit for the benefit of all the Parties concerned, and whereas some or all of the said Parties now is or are or hereafter may be concerned or interested in some other trade or business, It is therefore hereby expressly stipulated covenanted and agreed by and between the said Parties to these Presents that they shall not nor shall any or either of them become bound or responsible the one for the other nor shall the act or undertaking of any one or more of them bind or oblige the others nor shall any of the said Parties not being the Agents and legal Attornies of the said Concern have any power or authority to make or execute any agreement contract any debt or debts for, on account or in the name of the said Concern or any of the Partners thereof without a special power to that purpose first had and obtained.

Exclusive powers of the agents.

## ARTICLE 13

It being incompatible with the nature of this agreement and the trade to be carried on under it that all or any of the said Parties to these presents should engage in or undertake any trade Business or Concern to the detriment of the interest of the present Company and Copartnership or that can or may in any manner injure, hurt or interfere with the trade views or speculations thereof. It is therefore mutually covenanted and agreed by and between the said Parties to these presents that they shall not nor shall any or either of them during the period of the present Concern either jointly or individually enter into

Penalties against competition.



or engage in any trade Business or Commerce carried on or to be carried on in or to any part of the said Indian Country commonly called the North-West or its Dependencies or into any other posts places, or situations where the said Concern at the time of the commencement of this agreement or at any time during the continuance thereof shall or may carry on any trade or commerce, nor shall any of the said Parties directly or indirectly counsel advise assist or be concerned or interested in any trade business or commerce carried or to be carried on by other person or persons in the said Indian Country or at the said posts or places or their dependencies aforesaid, under the Penalty of FIVE THOUSAND POUNDS for each ninety second share held by the party failed or contravening this special clause and agreement, to be paid by him to the other Partners of the said Concern who shall or may conform hereto. And it is further stipulated and agreed by these presents that if any of the said Parties hereto or any other Person or Persons to be hereafter a Partner or Partners in this Concern shall at any time retire from or sell and dispose of his or their share and interest in the said Concern or forfeit or be deprived of his or their share therein under any of the articles of this agreement, every such party Person or Persons shall nevertheless be equally held and bound to the observance of this article and in case of contradiction thereto equally liable to the penalty of Five thousand pounds as if he or they had continued a partner or partners.

## ARTICLE 14

Admission  
and resign-  
ation of  
Partners.

AND WHEREAS it is intended and necessary that the consent of the Parties concerned should be had and taken in all matters touching the arrangements to be made with Partners withdrawing from the said Concern or assigning their interest therein as

also for the admitting and receiving fit and proper persons as Partners in the said Concern instituting or defending suits settling and composing differences making and entering into agreements signing all necessary acts and deeds and doing other necessary matters and things touching and regarding the said Concern and the interest thereof in all cases when all or any of the matters aforesaid shall not have been regulated and determined at any of the meetings of the said Concern held at the Grand Portage as hereinbefore established and also for carrying into effect when necessary the Resolutions passed and adopted at such meetings : IT IS THEREFORE hereby stipulated and agreed that the said Simon McTavish John Gregory Wm. McGillivray Duncan McGillivray William Hallowell and Roderic McKenzie be and they or any two of them are hereby named constituted and appointed the Attornies of the said Concern for all the above purposes for and during the period of its continuance or until expressly revoked by the aforesaid annual meeting at the Grand Portage as hereinafter mentioned and not otherwise.—

And it is further stipulated and agreed that a Power of Attorney from the said Parties to these Presents and from all and every other Person or Persons who shall or may at any time hereafter be admitted a Partner or Partners in the said Concern be made and executed in due form of law to the said Simon McTavish John Gregory William McGillivray Duncan McGillivray William Hallowell and Roderic McKenzie as Attornies as aforesaid, giving to them or any two of them as aforesaid full power for all the above purposes and for doing and performing all such other matters and things which to them or any two of them as aforesaid shall appear for the benefit and advantage of the Parties concerned and when a more special power from the said Parties to that effect might be requisite and necessary.—And whenever it shall become necessary to appoint other Attornies in the room and stead of all or any of

Powers of  
the agents.

those hereinbefore named either by reason of their decease their retiring from the Concern or otherwise, it is stipulated and agreed that the Partners in the same House of McTavish Frobisher and Co. being Partners in this Concern shall always have the preference—It is however hereby understood and agreed that in case the said McTavish Frobisher and Co shall at any time make an improper use of the powers hereby conferred on them as Attornies as aforesaid it shall be in the power of the said annual meeting at the Grand Portage by a majority of voices to alter or change the same or substitute other powers in their stead according to circumstances and as in the opinion of such annual meeting shall seem most advantageous for the benefit of the Concern.

## ARTICLE 15

AND WHEREAS it may happen that before the time limited for the expiration of the present Concern some of the Partners may die or retire therefrom or others be admitted as Partners therein, It is THEREFORE hereby expressly stipulated and agreed that such change or alteration in the persons of the Partners shall in nowise dissolve alter or change the present Partnership and Concern which shall nevertheless continue and be carried on as the same Partnership and Concern under the Rules and Regulations contained in this agreement until the expiration thereof at the time hereinbefore limited.

## ARTICLE 16

Shares of  
deceased  
partners.

AND WHEREAS great difficulties might arise by continuing and extending the share and interest of a deceased Partner in the Concern and all the rights and privileges he holds under it to

his heirs or legal representatives on account of their not being Parties to his agreement, their distant places of Residence and consequent inconvenience that might arise in their being represented at the meetings of the Concern, to avoid all which delays and difficulties. It is HEREBY stipulated and agreed that upon the death of any of the Partners in the said Concern his share and interest therein shall cease and determine and the same shall from after his decease revert to and become the property of the Concern to be by them used and disposed of as they shall see fit; but in order that such heirs or legal representatives may enjoy in some measure the Benefits of the care industry and exertions of such deceased Partner in the said Concern, It is hereby stipulated that the heirs or legal representatives of such deceased Partner shall, for and during the space of seven years from and after his decease if the concern do not sooner determine, be entitled to demand have and receive of and from the Concern (to be accounted for and paid to such heirs and legal representatives by the said McTavish Frobisher & Co. as acting for the said Concern) an equivalent to one half of the share and interest such deceased Partner held in the Concern, being the same right which a retired Partner is entitled to claim and receive as hereinafter is mentioned. And the heirs and representatives of such deceased Partner, by taking and receiving such equivalent, shall be severally held and bound to the observance of all every the articles of this agreement respecting the doing assisting or being concerned in any matter or thing which may tend to the damage loss or injuring of the Concern, and in case of contravention thereof he shall be deprived of all further benefit and interest to him or them out of the said Concern.

## ARTICLE 17

How part-  
ners may  
retire.

Whenever any of the Parties to the Presents or others who may hereafter be admitted Partners in the present Concern may be desirous of retiring from the business of the Concern they shall and are hereby permitted to do so in the following manner and upon the following terms and conditions that is to say:— That the Partner now holding four ninety second shares under the present agreement shall and he is hereby permitted to retire from taking an active part in the Concern whenever he shall think fit and is hereby allowed to have and receive from the said Concern an equivalent of two of the said shares for and during the space of seven years from and after his so retiring if the present Concern shall so long continue and without any duty being attached to the interest he shall so receive. That the Partners who held one forty sixth share under the aforesaid agreement of the thirtieth day of October one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five and who now hold two ninety second shares under the present agreement shall and they are hereby permitted, two each year in rotation as their names stand in the agreement, to retire from taking an active part in the Concern upon giving one year's notice of such intention and shall have and receive from the said Concern an equivalent to one of the said shares for and during the space of seven years from and after so retiring if the present Concern shall so long continue but without being liable to any of the duties thereof. That Persons admitted as Partners under an assignment made to them of any of the aforesaid vacant fourteen shares or others who may hereafter be admitted as Partners in consequence of some of the existing Partners in the Concern having retired therefrom, or shares therein having become vacant, shall and they are

hereby permitted to retire from the Concern two each year in rotation as they shall have been admitted into the same after having wintered three years in the Interior Country as Partners, and upon their giving one year's notice as aforesaid, of their intention to retire, and not otherwise. That all Partners shall be permitted in manner as above stated, without holding or retaining any share or interest as aforesaid in the Concern from and after the period of their retiring whenever they shall think fit. That upon any Partners retiring from the Concern his <sup>Mode of making up their accounts.</sup> portion of all the goods in the Indian Country shall be accounted for to him by the said Concern agreeable to the following method which has been hitherto followed and observed in similar cases by the Persons heretofore concerned in the aforesaid trade and commerce, that is to say : The goods at the Grand <sup>Valuation of goods.</sup> Portage shall be accounted for at the rate of twenty-five per cent on the Montreal costs and advances, those at every other post in the North-West, except English River and parts beyond, at the rate of fifty-seven per cent on the cost and advances of the Grand Portage, those of the English River and Posts beyond it at the rate of ninety per cent on the cost and advances of the Grand Portage ; And as the present concern have in view to extend their posts to other and more distant parts of the North-West, towards the Rocky Mountains and beyond them, the charge on goods at all such Posts shall be regulated according to the expense of sending them thither when known. It is however understood and agreed that whenever it shall be found from experience that the expense of carrying goods to the Grand Portage or into the Indian Country or Interior Country shall increase or diminish, a new tariff shall be made out accordingly it being the intention that young men succeeding to shares shall pay no more for such goods than their true cost. That all debts <sup>Clerks' debts.</sup> due by Guides, Men or Interpreters shall be accounted for at one third of their amount, the debts of the Clerks at their full value

Forts,  
buildings,  
vessels, &c.

and it is expressly consented and agreed as a rule to be followed that all the forts and buildings at Grand Portage and in the Interior Country vessels boats cattle and all other property of and belonging to the said Concern upon the communication shall be accounted for conformable to the prices or value affixed to the same by the majority of the Concern the preceding year in the inventories made thereof; For all which said property or proportion of such retiring Partner therein the said Concern shall not be bound to account until one year after the account thereof shall be closed. That every Partner so retiring from the Concern is hereby considered to be subject to the same observance of and compliance with all the matters rules and regulations herein contained touching and concerning the said trade and commerce and in case of contravention thereto equally liable to the Penalties herein expressed as if he still continued an active Partner. That every Partner retiring from the Concern, except those who shall by misconduct or otherwise forfeit their shares and interest therein which thereupon revert to and become the property of the Concern as herein before mentioned, shall release assign and make over to the remaining Partners in the Concern or their Attornies herein before named for the benefit and behoof of the whole or to such person or persons as shall with the consent of the said Concern have been agreed to be admitted a Partner or Partners therein in the room or place such retiring Partner then holds or may be entitled to hold in the said Concern reserving to him the right to demand and receive of and from the said Concern for and during the space of seven years from and after the time of his so-retiring if the Concern shall so long continue and be accounted for and paid to him by the said McTavish Frobisher and Company an equivalent to one half of the net produce if the shares and interest be held in the said Concern at the time of his retiring therefrom. And in case any partner should be desirous to sell and

Retiring  
Partners.

dispose of the interest he shall be entitled to have and receive from the said Concern after he shall have retired therefrom as aforesaid. he shall be permitted so to do provided such sale may be made to any of the Partners in the Concern who upon giving notice of their purchase shall be considered as vested in all the rights and interests and shall be permitted to have and enjoy the same in the same manner as such retired Partners could or might have done.

## ARTICLE 18

That every Person hereafter to be admitted a Partner in this Concern shall be accepted and approved of by the other Partners or their Attornies named and appointed under this agreement and the said Partners or their said Attornies (or a Retiring Partner when it shall have been so agreed) shall thereupon by an Act in due form transfer assign and make over to every such person so to be admitted a Partner all such share and shares with the rights profits and advantages arising or to arise therefrom as it may have been agreed, such Persons shall have hold and enjoy in the said Concern, in and by which act every such Person shall bind and oblige himself to the performance and observance of all every the matter and things mentioned and contained in this agreement under the penalties therein expressed as full and effectually to all intents and purposes as if such Person had been a Party to these presents and signed the same.

## ARTICLE 19

That all engagements and undertakings made and entered into by the Partners of the former North-West Company trading together under the aforesaid agreement of the thirtieth day of



October one thousand seven hundred and ninety five touching the aforesaid trade and commerce shall be assumed allowed and confirmed by the present Concern and by them be carried into force effect as if made and entered into by the Parties to these Presents.

ARTICLE 20

.....(1)

ARTICLE 21

That whenever the Grand Portage is mentioned in this agreement it is understood to mean that Place of *Rendez-vous* for conducting and managing the general Business of the Concern in Summer, but should the Parties concerned determine and agree among themselves to remove and change such place of *Rendez-vous* from the Grand Portage to any other Place on Lake Superior more convenient for the purposes aforesaid the name of such shall be taken and considered as applying in the same manner to all the purposes of this agreement and being synonymous to the Grand Portage.

ARTICLE 22

And lastly it is stipulated and agreed that the present agreement shall be deposited with and remain in the hands of the Attornies of the said Concern hereby named and appointed and that every person having an interest therein shall be entitled to

(1) Article relating to Mr. Alexander N. McLeod, who declined to take his share.

have free access thereto and communication thereof at all times when required.

IN WITNESS whereof the said Parties to these presents have hereunto set their respective hands and seals at the Grand Portage aforesaid this fifth day of July in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and two.

Signed,

Simon McTavish,	(L. S.)	Wm. Hollowell,	(L. S.)
Jno. Gregory,	"	Wm. McKay,	"
Wm. McGillivray,	"	John McDonald,	"
Dun'n McGillivray,	"	Arch'd McLeod,	"
John Sayer,	"	Alex. MacDougall,	"
Jas. McKenzie,	"	Alex. McKay,	"
Sim'n Fraser,	"	John McGillivray,	"
Chas. Chaboillez,	"	R'd. McKenzie,	"
Dan. McTavish,	"	James Hughes,	"
Peter Grant,	"	Eneas Cameron,	"
Dun. Cameron,	"	Dan. McKenzie,	"
H. McGillis,	"	Ang. Shaw,	"
Alex. Henry,	"	John Finlay,	"
Alex. Fraser,	"	John McDonell,	"

Signed sealed and delivered, no stamp being used nor by law required, by the within named Parties in Presence of us.

(Signed,)

J. C. STUART,

JOHN K. WILLES.

T H E  
"NORTH-WEST AGREEMENT"

1804

Preamble.

THIS AGREEMENT made and executed at Montreal in the District of Montreal in the Province of Lower Canada this fifth day of November in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and four by and between John Gregory, William MacGillivray, Duncan McGillivray, William Hallowell and Roderic McKenzie being the Partners now composing the House of McTavish Frobisher and Company of Montreal aforesaid, the said Duncan MacGillivray being in this behalf represented by the said William MacGillivray his Attorney ; and Angus Shaw, Daniel McKenzie, William McKay, John MacDonald, Donald McTavish, John McDonell, Archibald Normand McLeod, Alexander MacDougall, Charles Chaboillez, John Sayer, Peter Grant, Alexander Fraser, Eneas Cameron, John Finlay, Duncan Cameron, James Hughes, Alexander MacKay, Hugh McGillis, Alexander Henry,

John MacGillivray, James McKenzie, Simon Fraser, John Duncan Campbell, David Thompson and John Thomson by the said John Gregory and William MacGillivray their Agents and Attornies duly authorised, the said Persons hereinbefore named being the Partners now composing the Company of Concern trading to the North-West or Indian Country and distinguished by the name of the Old North-West Company, OF THE ONE PART, and Sir Alexander MacKenzie, Thomas Forsyth, John Richardson and John Forsyth the last three trading in Montreal aforesaid under the Firm of Forsyth Richardson and Company, the said John Richardson and John Forsyth for themselves in their own persons, and the said Thomas Forsyth being represented by them the said Richardson and John Forsyth, his Attornies; Alexander Ellice, John Inglis and James Forsyth of London, Merchants, trading under the Firm of Phyn Inglis & Company by the said John Richardson and John Forsyth their Attornies, John O'Gilvie of Montreal aforesaid Merchant, John Mure of Quebec Merchant by the said John O'Gilvie his Attorney; Pierre Rocheblave, Alexander McKenzie, John MacDonald, James Leith, and John Wills, the last five being wintering Partners and represented by Sir Alexander McKenzie their Attorney; John Haldane another wintering Partner represented by the said John Forsyth his Attorney and the said Thomas Forsyth (represented as aforesaid) John Richardson and John Forsyth, as Trustees and assignees of the Estate of the late Firm of Leith Jameison & Company, and Thomas Thain of Montreal aforesaid, all of whom are Partners in the said North-West or Indian Country distinguished by the name of the New North-West Company OF THE OTHER PART.

WITNESSETH, that the said Parties to these Presents now and heretofore trading to the said North-West Country in opposition to each other being desirous to put an end to said opposition and to avoid the waste of property attending thereon and

to carry on the said trade in a more advantageous manner DO for this purpose consent and agree to coalesce and join their respective interests and to make the following stipulations and arrangements in that behalf.

#### ARTICLE I

That the said Parties to these Presents shall and do hereby coalesce and join their said respective interests in the trade and commerce aforesaid which joint interest and concern will commence with the Outfit of the year one thousand eight hundred and five and shall continue to be carried on during the period limited by the articles of agreement of the said Old Company bearing date the fifth day of July one thousand eight hundred and two, that is to say, for eighteen years yet to come. That the present Coalition and joint Concern shall be carried on under the name or Firm of the North-West Company and shall include as well the trade commonly carried on in and to the said North-West Country by both the said companies, as the trade carried on at all the other Posts or places now occupied by the said Old Company.

#### ARTICLE II

Distribu-  
tion of the  
shares.

That the said Old Company shall hold and possess three fourths of the said joint concern and the said New Company shall hold and possess one fourth thereof and when the number of shares of the said joint concern shall be increased to one hundred, the said Old Company shall hold seventy-five of such shares and the said New Company twenty-five, in all profits and losses that shall occur in the said joint trade and concern.—That the said Old and New Company shall each divide their respec-

five shares and proportions aforesaid in the said joint concern unto and amongst their individual members in such a manner as they shall see fit;—It is however hereby understood and agreed that the said New Company or their representatives shall and do transfer and secure to each of their six Wintering Partners in the Interior Country one hundredth share of the whole of the said joint concern, and shall allow and pay to the said Wintering Partners and their Successors the same advantages and emoluments as shall be and paid by the said joint concern to such Wintering Partners of the said Old Company as do now hold one ninety second share therein, and which ninety second share will by the present agreement become one hundredth share in the said joint concern.

### ARTICLE III

That the Partners of the said New Company and their Representatives shall hold and possess their said one fourth part or twenty-five shares in the said joint concern for and during the continuation of the present agreement and no such part or share as may become vacant by the death of any of the Partners in the said New Company or otherwise shall revert or belong to the said joint concern, but the same shall be preserved and retained by the said New Company or such Persons as shall become Partners in their Concern under such conditions and arrangements respecting purchases transfers and division of shares amongst themselves as they shall see fit; Upon condition however of being bound to fulfill and observe every engagement and stipulation which the present Partners of the said New Company have become and now are bound and liable to fulfill and observe by these presents agreeable to the forms and Rules established in this behalf by the said articles of agreement of <sup>The conditions.</sup>

the said Old North-West Company bearing date the fifth day of July one thousand eight hundred and two (except in so far as the same are altered or modified by this agreement) and to all such other Rules and Regulations as shall be made by the said joint concern. It is however understood and agreed by and between the said Parties to these presents that in case of a vacancy by death or otherwise in any of the said six shares hereby reserved by the said New Company for their said six Wintering Partners such vacant shares shall revert and belong to the said joint concern and be by them disposed of and filled up as they shall see fit, and it is further understood and agreed by and between the said Parties that the share and interest which the late Firm of Leith Jameison and Company held in the said New Company shall at the expiration of the first outfit of the said joint concern be transferable to such of the Partners of the said New Company as shall agree to purchase the same.

#### ARTICLE IV

That the said New Company shall be entitled to and have and receive one fourth part or share of all the commissions and advantages that shall or may or arise from the said joint concern, first deducting from the amount of the whole the actual expenses of the General Establishment for transacting the Business of the said joint Concern.

#### ARTICLE V

The "Win-  
tering Part-  
ners."

That it being the intention of the said New Company at the expiration of their agreement bearing date the twentieth day of October of the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight to put their said six Wintering Partners upon the same

footing in every respect as Wintering Partners of the said Old Company who now hold one ninety second share and which will become one hundredth share of the said joint concern when the number of the shares thereof will be increased to one hundred as aforesaid It is therefore stipulated and agreed that when the present agreement shall next summer at the Grand Portage or other place of Depot on Lake Superior be notified to the said Wintering Partners, they shall be bound to declare their acceptation thereof or their intention of retiring therefrom at the expiration of the aforesaid agreement of the twentieth day of October one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight and in case the six Wintering Partners or any of them shall decline to accept and acquiesce in the present agreement it is further stipulated and agreed that the said New Company shall have a right to fill up the vacancies that may happen by said refusal or retirement of all or any of the six Wintering Partners by such of any of their deserving Clerks as they shall see fit. It is however understood and agreed that after the said vacancies shall have been filled up by the said New Company the said Old Company shall have the right to appoint to, and fill up the three next vacancies that shall happen in the shares of the Wintering Partners of the said joint concern, the said Old Company having promised the same; which vacant shares being filled up as aforesaid, all other vacancies which shall or may happen in the wintering shares of the said joint concern shall be regulated and filled up according to length of service and merit without distinction or partiality resulting from the Person or Persons to be appointed having been a Clerk or Clerks either to the said Old or New Company.—AND it is further understood and agreed that in case of any of the said six Wintering Partners shall refuse to accept any share under the present agreement as aforesaid, he shall not in that case be exonerated or discharged from his debts or engagement by him entered into,

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or to which he may be liable as a Partner of the said New Company but under the express condition of binding himself not to interfere directly or indirectly in the trade carried on or to be carried on by the said joint concern within the limits hereinafter described under the same restrictions and penalties as retiring Partners of the said Old Company are liable to under their aforesaid articles of agreement of the fifth day of July one thousand eight hundred and two.

## ARTICLE VI

Negociations with  
H. B. Co.

That although the said New Company are by the present agreement limited to one fourth part of the said joint trade to be carried on from Canada into the Interior Country yet should circumstances arise in the course of events that should enable the said Joint Company to obtain a participation in the general trade and rights of the Hudson Bay Company or the whole thereof by purchase then and in that case it is hereby covenanted and agreed that the members who shall then represent the said New Company shall not be hereby precluded from negotiating with the representatives of the said Old Company for a more extensive participation in said Joint Concern which thereby shall or may be formed or extended and for such Quantum hereof as shall be agreed upon ; But it is understood that any permission which may be obtained from the said Hudson Bay Company for a partial transit of merchandize or returns through their Territories shall not be considered as forming a ground for the Negociation of such increased participation ; And it is also understood that the said New Company shall sustain no part of the Expenses which have been occasioned by the late adventure made by the said Old Company to the Hudson Bay Territory by Sea ; But in case a permission shall have been ob-

Adventures to the  
Hudson  
Bay.

tained by the negotiation which the said Duncan McGillivray has been instructed to carry on with the Hudson Bay Company for such a transit, then the expenses of the said Adventure shall be fairly stated and a fourth part thereof be supported by the said New Company, who shall also sustain and pay a proportion of the consideration which may have been agreed to be given for such permission of transit and shall also be bound to fulfil the conditions of such agreement as may have been made by the said Duncan McGillivray in that behalf. That the said New Company shall not in any case be liable to the expenses or consequences of any law suit which the said Hudson Bay Company may institute by reason of the trespass they may conceive to have been committed upon their Territory or Rights by the said New Company, be bound to take part in any future adventure by sea to Hudson's Bay unless the Permission of that Company shall be first had and obtained.

## ARTICLE VII

That one fourth part of all the goods wares and merchandize <sup>The</sup> required for the purposes of the said joint trade shall be imported <sup>agents.</sup> by the Agents of the said New Company from their correspondences in London and one undivided fourth part of the returns or exports of the said joint trade shall be consigned to the Correspondents of the New Company by their said Agents, and in no case shall there be a division of the said returns or exports between the said Old and New Companies previous to the sale thereof. That the whole of the Imports and Exports relative to the said joint trade shall always be on the account and risk thereof although imported from or consigned to distinct or different Houses. And the said Correspondents shall also effect the insurance upon the goods wares and merchandizes furnished by

them and upon the consignments made to them as aforesaid. That at the request of the joint Agents of the said Old and New Companies each of them shall furnish a due proportion of capital and cash advances necessary for providing supplies and carrying on the said joint trade, which cash advances on the part of the said Old Company shall be furnished and paid by the House of McTavish Frobisher and Company and on the part of the said New Company shall be furnished and paid by the House of Forsyth Richardson and Company. That the proceeds of the returns of the said joint trade when realized shall be accounted for and divided or remitted and paid in the proportions above mentioned as the case may require.

## ARTICLE VIII

The  
"agreement" of  
1802.

That the aforesaid Articles of agreement of the said Old Company bearing date the fifth day of July one thousand eight hundred and two (a copy of which is hereunto annexed) shall be binding on each and every of the Partners of the said New Company and their Successors and all others to be admitted Partners in the said joint concern in the same manner as if the said articles were inserted at length and formed part of the present agreement except in so far as they are altered or modified in and by this Present Agreement.

## ARTICLE IX

Joint  
agency.

That the said New Company shall appoint and furnish two Agents being Partners of the said New Company and of the said joint concern to represent them and to be employed in such branch or branches of the exclusive department of the said joint

concern at Montreal as shall be found expedient and necessary, one of which said Agents shall go annually to the place of depot on Lake Superior, whenever the same shall be fixed, to participate with the Agents of the Old Company in the joint management of the outfits and other business and arrangements of the said joint concern, and which Agent of the said New Company shall be considered the Attorney of the Partners of the said New Company Wintering Partners thereof excepted, unless when such Agent acts by special power from any of the said Wintering Partners then absent and there vote for the said Partners accordingly. That such of the said Wintering Partners of the said New Company as may be present at the meetings of the said joint concern at the said place of depot, shall personally vote, and such Partner who may be absent may appoint as his Attorney any other Partner of the said joint concern as he shall think fit and the Wintering Partners of the said Old Company may do the like. That the said Agents of the said New Company shall act the one for the other as circumstances may require and when both of them are at Montreal one of them shall be considered as the acting Agent in the Department allotted to him and the other shall give assistance in that department when the same shall be required; And it is understood that such other Agent when at Montreal after the accounts of each year from the Upper Country are settled shall take all necessary information and do every thing that may be requisite or useful in and about the Business to be done at the depot aforesaid the ensuing season.

## ARTICLE X

The said New Company hereby nominate and appoint as their said agents the said John Ogilvie and Thomas Thain who shall

continue and remain as such and during the space of five years from the day of the date hereof and it is understood and agreed that exclusive of the Agent of the said New Company who shall go to the place of depot on Lake Superior for the Business of the said joint concern the said New Company shall and may the next ensuing Season if they see fit send up any other of their Partners to settle the Business of the said New Company and to consolidate the joint concern by delivering and receiving the property of the said two companies, which being effected the duties of such other Partner shall cease.

#### ARTICLE XI

Vacancies,  
how filled.

In the event of a vacancy in one or other of the Agencies of the said New Company during the said five years by death or the retiring of the said Agents or either of them from the said joint concern, or in case at the expiration of the said five years the said two Agents or either of them shall decline to continue as Agents or Agent as aforesaid of the said New Company, the Partners of the said New Company shall and may in such cases and in every other vacancy that may afterwards happen in the said Agencies nominate and appoint any other fit and proper Person or Persons as Agent or Agents as aforesaid being Partners of the said joint concern

#### ARTICLE XII

That all goods at Montreal shall be taken at cost and charges and the goods in the inventories and Indian Credits at the different Posts in the Interior Country belonging to each of the Old and New Companies (those remaining at Hudson's Bay includ-

ed) shall be received and taken by the said joint concern at the evaluation made according to the tariff of advance of the said Old Company now in all and the debts due by Winterers of the said Old and New Companies shall be assumed by the said joint concern according to the mode of evaluating the same by the said Old Company. That the Forts and buildings the vessels on the Lakes Superior, Huron and Erie, comprehending three eighths of the Schooner Nancy, shall be taken by the said joint concern upon a fair principle of evaluation to be agreed upon;— and all contracts and agreements made and entered into by either of the said Old and New Company shall be assumed and fulfilled by the said joint Company according to the true spirit, and import of every such contract and agreement.

## ARTICLE XIII

That the Business of forwarding the goods, wares and merchandizes of the said joint concern at Kingston and Niagara shall be conducted and carried on by the correspondents of the said Old and New Company jointly without any division being made of the said goods wares and merchandises and the said correspondents shall participate in the profits and advantages arising from the said forwarding business in the proportion of the interests of the said Old and New Company in the said joint concern. That at Sandwich, Angus MacIntosh the present agent of the said Old Company shall be continued as the agent of the said joint concern, but the correspondents of the New Company shall supply the proportion of provisions required for the said joint concern upon the same terms and conditions and of like quantities as those supplied by the said Angus MacIntosh while agent as aforesaid.

Trade by  
Kingstoft,  
Niagara  
and Sand-  
wich.

## ARTICLE XIV

Tobacco. That the Tobacco to be imported from the United States for the said joint concern shall be ordered proportionably from the respective correspondents of the said Old and New Company.

## ARTICLE XV

\* That the mode of settling and determining all questions touching and regarding the said joint concern at the meetings thereof to be held at the place of depot on Lake Superior shall be according to the Rules and Regulations established by the aforesaid agreement of the said Old Company, reference being had to the increased number of shares into which the said joint concern will by the present agreement become divided, and every power which shall be given for the commencing and conducting of suits, or for other purposes at Montreal shall include the names of the Agents of the said New Company.

## ARTICLE XVI

That all the Wintering Partners of the said Old and New Company, or those who may become Partners of the present Joint Concern, shall have an equal right and privilege of coming down to Montreal in rotation according to a rule to be agreed upon.

## ARTICLE XVII.

That no trade or business shall be undertaken or carried on by the said joint concern but what is properly understood to be the FUR TRADE or necessarily depending thereon without the express consent and acquiescence of the Representatives or Agents of the said New Company, except the Fisheries carried on at the different posts below Quebec, now leased by the said Old Company.

The object  
of the  
Joint  
Company.

## ARTICLE XVIII

That each of the said Parties to these presents shall, as soon as conveniently may be, make up an account of their advances for the said joint trade for the year one thousand eight hundred and five, and of which regular entries shall be made accordingly.

## ARTICLE XIX.

That the Inventories of the goods and debts at the respective posts of the said Old and New Companies in the Interior Country shall be received and taken in the state they are produced at the said place of General Depot the next summer, those at the other depots, Lake Lapluie included and on the communication, shall be considered as definitive but all the others shall be verified in the Interior Country when taken in the Fall of the year one thousand eight hundred and five; And the respective Parties to these Presents shall not be bound to each other for the amount of such Inventories until the thirtieth day of November one thousand eight hundred and six.



## ARTICLE XX

.....(1)

## XXI

No compe-  
tition  
allowed.

And it is hereby understood and agreed that none of the Parties to these presents nor any Person or Persons who may hereafter become a Partner or Partners of the said Joint Concern shall directly or indirectly carry on or be concerned in any separate trade at any of the posts or places now occupied or that may be hereafter occupied and traded to by the said Concern, nor sell or supply goods or furnish aid and support to any Person or Persons trading to the same posts or places with the said Joint Company under the penalties contained in the aforesaid articles of agreements of the said Old Company bearing date the said fifth day of July, one thousand eight hundred and two. It is however well understood and agreed that the selling of Goods and furnishing supplies by any Partner or Partners of the said Joint Company to any Person or Persons trading to or at any Posts or Places the waters whereof fall into the Mississippi or any other part or place to the Southward of Lake Superior reckoned from the mouth of the River St. Louis shall not be considered as a breach of the present agreement and no penalty shall attach on or be incurred by the Partners or Partner who may have so sold goods and furnished such aid supplies, but no goods shall be sold by any Partner or Partners of the said Joint Concern to be taken or carried into the Interior of the said North-West Country by the route of the said River St. Louis and if any

(1) Special provisions relating to the Firm of MacTavish Frøbisher & Co.

Person or Persons who may have purchased goods or received supplies and aid from any Partner or Partners of the said Joint Concern shall without the consent of such Partner or Partners go into the said Interior Country by the route of the said River St. Louis or by the Mississippi, Missouri, or any other indirect route, and trade to any post or place occupied by the said Joint Company or where they may carry on trade at the time provided the same be to the Northward of the above described limits, then and in such case the Agents of the said Joint Concern shall give notice thereof in writing to such Partner or Partners, whereby he or they shall be required to desist from selling goods to equipping supplying aiding or supporting such Person or Persons so trading as aforesaid in, to, or at the same places with the said Joint Company and in opposition to their interests. And in case such Partner or Partners of the said Joint Concern shall after such notice given and requisition made still persist to furnish Goods and afford supplies support and aid to such person or persons so continuing his or their said trade such Partner or Partners shall then be considered to have committed a breach of the present agreement and be liable to all the penalties aforesaid.

AND FINALLY it is agreed that the said Parties to These Presents have hereby negotiated and coalesced upon principles of equality and reciprocity of rights excepting as to the Quantum of interest with the influence resulting therefrom, and the modifications thereof which the present agreement may be fairly construed to introduce, such principles shall be resorted to in clearing up or settling any difference of opinion should such hereafter arise upon the true construction or import of any of the articles of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS whereof the said Parties to these presents have to two parts hereof set and subscribed their names and

affixed their seals at Montreal aforesaid, the day and year first above written.

Alex. McKenzie.

Thomas Forsyth, by John Richardson and John Forsyth,  
his atts.

John Richardson.

John Forsyth.

Alex. Ellice, by John Richardson and John Forsyth, his atts.

John Haldane, by John Richardson and John Forsyth, his atts.

Thom's Forsyth, by John Richardson and John Forsyth, his  
atts.

John Richardson, } Trustees and assignees of the Estate of  
John Forsyth, } the late firm of Leith, Jamieson & Co.

John Inglis, by John Richardson and John Forsyth, his atts.

James Forsyth, by John Richardson and John Forsyth, his atts.

John Ogilvie.

John Mure, by John Ogilvie, his atty.

P. de Rocheblave, by Alex. MacKenzie, his atty.

Alex. MacKenzie, by Alex. MacKenzie, his atty.

John Macdonald, by Alex. MacKenzie, his atty.

James Leith, by Alex. MacKenzie, his atty.

John Wills, by Alex. MacKenzie, his atty.

John Finlay, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.

Duncan Cameron, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.

James Hughes, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.

Alex. McKay, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.

Hugh McGillis, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.

Alex. Henry, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.

John MacGillivray, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray,  
his atts.

James MacKenzie, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.

Simou Fraser, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.

John D. Campbell, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
D. Thompson, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
John Thomson, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
John Gregory.  
Wm MacGillivray.  
Duncan MacGillivray, by Wm MacGillivray, his atty.  
Wm Hallowell.  
Rod. McKenzie.  
Angus Shaw, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
Dl. McKenzie, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
Wm. McKay, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
John McDonald, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
Donatd McTavish, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
John McDonell, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
Arch. N. McLeod, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
Alex. MacDougal, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
Chs Chaboillez, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
John Sayer, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
Peter Grant, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
Alex. Fraser, by John Gregory and Wm MacGillivray, his atts.  
Eneas Cameron, by John Gregory & Wm MacGillivray, his atts.

Signed and sealed and delivered in the presence of

EDW'DS WM GRAY,  
FRED'K W. ERMATINGER.